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OF THE

ASANT BONDAREFF.

*LABOR.*

INTERDICTED BY THE CZAR OF RUSSIA.

*Made known, Augmented, and Edited*

BY

COUNT LYOF TOLSTOI,

*Author of "The Kreutzer Sonata," "Anna Karenina,"  
"War and Peace," "My Religion," etc.*

TRANSLATED BY

MISS MARY CRUGER.

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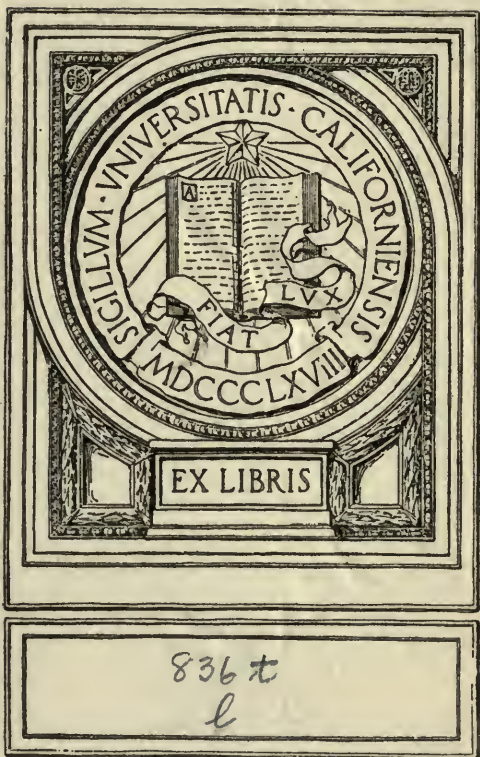
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The Suppressed Book of the Peasant Bondareff.

LABOR:

*By T. M. Bondareff - Tolstoi*  
THE DIVINE COMMAND.

MADE KNOWN, AUGMENTED AND EDITED

BY  
COUNT LYOF TOLSTOÏ.

AUTHOR OF "THE KREUTZER SONATA."

TRANSLATED BY  
MARY CRUGER.

INTERDICTED BY THE CZAR OF RUSSIA.

NEW YORK:  
THE POLLARD PUBLISHING COMPANY,  
13 BARCLAY STREET.  
1890.

LABOR

THE DIVINE COMMAND

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*Labor: The Divine Command.*

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1890  
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### LABOR, BY LYOF TOLSTOÏ AND TIMOTHY BONDAREFF.

#### FIRST PART.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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OF what *Labor* consists :

The peasant *Bondareff* inspired the social theories of Tolstoï,—the two laws of humanity, that of manual labor for men, that of motherhood for women.

Tolstoï's review of Bondareff.

The Bible and the Gospel.

How the theory of manual labor should be interpreted. The working of the land : a remedy for social evils. Extent and consequences of this theory.

The book of Bondareff. Remarks on its translation.

*Labor* is the work of Count Lyof Tolstoï and of the peasant Timothy Bondareff. But it is not, properly speaking, a collaboration. The book is in fact composed of two different studies, which are as two parts of one book : one by Lyof Tolstoï, entitled *The Work and Theory of Bondareff*, which serves as introduction to the

other, which is by Bondareff, and is entitled *Labor, by the peasant Bondareff.*

*Labor* is composed of three principal chapters, which we have entitled :

I. Introduction. Life of Bondareff. Object of his work.

II. Labor according to the Bible.

III. Appendices. Love and Labor. Bondareff's Will.

Bondareff is a peasant of the district of Manoussinsk. He belongs to that class, so numerous in Russia, which seeks for truth in holy books. But while many know only the Gospels, Bondareff, who belongs to the sect of *Sabbatists*, read the whole Bible. Scarcely able to spell, he puzzled out each verse, believing from the outset to have discovered here the solution of all social questions. He found formulated in Genesis the essential law for man in the obligation of manual labor. Persuaded that salvation depends on labor, he learned to write that he might make known what he considered to be the truth of truths. At the age of sixty-five years he composed an essay in which, under the form of biblical verses, he undertook to show that tilling the earth is the highest of all labors. He overcame all the difficulties arising from his ignorance and his advanced age. Working all day in the fields, and devoting the hours of night to his writing, he accomplished after several years the project he had conceived. But the manuscript sent to the

Czar, in the form of a request, was rejected, and its printing was forbidden by the authorities.

In the meantime, in 1885, Bondareff became known to Tolstoï, whose renown was already great among the people. Struck by the profound truth of the peasant's theories, the author of *My Religion* introduced into his own life the reform that Bondareff had preached; he set himself to follow the plough, to use the awl, and, in a word, to work with his hands. Till then he had had but glimpses of these reforms, without professing them openly.\* The truth only appeared to him in all its brightness, when Bondareff placed before him his manuscript. He then developed Bondareff's views, while modifying them and giving them a wider and more profound meaning, in his great works, *What is my Life?* (of which the true title is, *What then must be done?*)† and *What should be done*, which is the answer to the first, and forms with it one complete work.‡

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\* See, in *War and Peace*, the reflections of Pierre Bezouchof and of Léonie. Consult also, *Anna Karénine* and *My Confession*.

† *What is my Life?* translated by Gatzouk and Em. Pagès. One volume. *Illustrated Library*, 1888.

‡ Tolstoï was familiar with the work of Bondareff, before writing *What is my Life?* and *What should be done*. Besides the many other points of resemblance that they display, we give here a passage from *What is my Life?* (page 164.) where Tolstoï makes evident allusion to Bondareff. "Wealth," says Tolstoï, "is but slavery; it has the same object and like results. Its object is to free man from the primordial law, according to the

In 1888, to show that the ideas of which he made himself the apostle were not illusive dreams, or the conceptions of a paradoxical mind, Tolstoï himself edited in *Russian Wealth*\* Bondareff's book, whose publication had been forbidden. On this occasion he wrote a profound essay on the work and theory of Bondareff, which we publish herewith together with Bondareff's own production.

The principal reason for presenting to the world a translation of *Labor* is that it possesses great value, not only as showing Tolstoï's own views, but as displaying the great intelligence belonging to the reform that he advocated. Bondareff's work is the simple but profound effort of an uneducated peasant, who stammeringly proclaimed in 1881 the great reform of which Tolstoï subsequently became the champion and herald.

## I.

Between the doctrine of the peasant Bondareff and that of the noble Lyof Tolstoï exists a strong and remarkable resemblance. Tolstoï, as we have said, knew Bondareff; he

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expression of a popular writer, or the natural law of life as we call it. This law prescribes to each of us personal labor as the means of existence."—"The popular writer" of whom Tolstoï speaks is no other than Bondareff, who, as we shall see, bases manual labor on the primitive or primordial law: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

\* A journal published under the direction of M. Obolonski.

had questioned him on the idea he had conceived that labor was a social remedy ; he had read his work, and had also edited it. Bondareff had thus been the inspirer of Tolstoi's social theories, as the sectary Soutaïef inspired his religious beliefs.\*

We shall find in Tolstoi's last philosophic work, *What should be done*, his ideas on social reform.

Every man should by the work of his hands support himself and his family. Every woman should nourish and educate her own children. To man, according to the Bible, God gave the law of manual labor, to woman that of motherhood. To violate these laws is death. But while to man disobedience to his own duty would be followed by speedy death, for woman the punishment comes more slowly. But the violation of both laws would lead ultimately to the annihilation of humanity.

But for a long time men have disregarded the law of labor. For a long time certain classes have oppressed others, and at this day the breaking of the law is pushed to the verge of folly. Do we not see Renan and others filled with the vain dream that one day machinery will accomplish all sorts of labor, while men will become but "bundles of enjoying nerves"?

While men so transgress their law, women usually obey theirs. Thus, according to Tol-

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\* Under the heads of *tolstoïsm* and *soutaïévism*, see in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes* of September 15, 1888, a masterly essay by M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu.

stoï, women are stronger than men, and to them men owe the hope of becoming in the future more faithful to primitive law. Still a mother who disregards her maternal duties, and finds all her pleasure in luxury and worldly enjoyments, will bring up her children to false ideas, and will teach them to neglect the duty of labor, by usurping the fruits of others' exertions. On the contrary, the faithful parent would instruct her children that labor is necessary to life.

We can compare these ideas with those expressed by Bondareff in the first paragraphs of *Labor according to the Bible*. Bondareff interprets the account given in Genesis as meaning that Adam was punished for eating the forbidden fruit, that is, for taking the fruits of others' labor. He was condemned to seek his own food, "to knead his bread," to use Bondareff's expression, by the sweat of his face.\*

It is by manual labor and above all by tilling the ground, and not by the merits of Christ, not by sacraments or other virtues, that Adam was to save his soul from hell. His descendants have inherited with original sin the obligation to labor for their redemption. The penance inflicted on Adam by Jehovah is not allegorical. That of Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," must be taken literally. Thus, on one side, man must procure by the

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\* It is shown by note on page 21 how this mode of interpreting the Bible can be justified.

labor of his hands the bread necessary for his own subsistence and for that of his wife and children; on the other, woman must acquit herself of all the duties of motherhood. Neither one nor the other can evade their respective obligations.

It is from *Labor according to the Bible* that Tolstoï has taken the leading idea which he has given in *What is my Life?* and *What should be done*. But while Bondareff claims that the law of labor and that of motherhood are the effects of a divine malediction, Tolstoï protests energetically against that notion. What we find in the verses of Genesis cited by Bondareff, and on which he rests his theory, is this: God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;" and to Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." \* But according to Tolstoï it is an error to believe labor is a curse; and to this error he attributes man's efforts to evade the law and to usurp the fruits of others' work. He ceases not to proclaim that labor is not a sorrow but a joy. Neither is motherhood a curse. It is a sacred and imperative duty; but it is also a joy, and an utter satisfaction.

Tolstoï thus arrives at the same conclusions with Bondareff, but from a different standpoint. That is, he opposes the Gospel to the Bible. He even claims to find in the Christian precept

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\* It is remarkable that the Talmud also teaches that every man should have a manual profession, and the Sanhedrim declares that labor is ordained by the law of Moses.

of love and charity the law of manual labor. As he says so eloquently on page 36: "The man who professes, not only by words but by actions, the doctrines of truth and love, will not deceive himself as to the object of his life. Never would the man whose idea of existence is to serve others imagine that he can help those who are dying of cold and hunger by making new laws, by casting cannon, working on objects of luxury, or by playing on the piano or violin. Love cannot be so foolish."

Though disagreeing on this point, Bondareff and Tolstoï unite in proclaiming that manual labor is not only man's duty, but that it is also the most excellent moral remedy, and an efficacious agent for salvation. Bondareff has shown Tolstoï how tilling the ground (which he so expressively calls "labor for bread") is the primitive occupation to which all men should apply themselves, and by which they should live. A man should not attempt secondary tasks till he has worked in the ground for forty days. In this way a man can nourish, clothe, lodge, and shelter himself without needing aid from others.

Both Bondareff and Tolstoï arrive at the conclusion that physical labor does not exclude intellectual activity, but, on the contrary, they hold that it augments the mind's dignity and power.

Thus *Labor* shows us that what Tolstoi has taught, Bondareff had previously put in practice. If we compare *What should be done*, with

*Labor*, we shall see that Tolstoï's theories are the same as Bondareff's. Without doubt the philosophic novelist has his own originality of ideas; but it is not the less true that he found the first outlines of his doctrine in Bondareff's book. And is it not an admirable spectacle to behold this great genius, the celebrated author of *War and Peace*, seeking in the home of the humble peasant the word of life, the magic formula which permits us to construct here below the heavenly Jerusalem of which we all dream?

## II.

*Labor* does not only show us how, under Bondareff's influence, Tolstoï's ideas on the social reform to be produced by physical labor are developed, but it enables us to comprehend more clearly how this theory and its consequences are only now arrived at.

What have they not said of Tolstoï, as laborer and shoemaker? A recent letter says: "Tolstoï's compatriots fail somewhat in respect towards this grand old man. From them comes the story of his learning the trade of shoemaking. We see this nobleman established in a shop, and we hesitate whether to admire or pity him. We should do neither. He does not make the trade his condition of life, but only a distraction, seeking a mental repose in manual exercise. Others make arms or weights; he

has a horror of useless efforts, and prefers to make shoes."

But this is far from being the spirit of the doctrine of Tolstoï and Bondareff. Physical labor is with them the highest duty, the essential character of man, and the true, the only mode of life. Without doubt, one must work to maintain the equilibrium between mind and body, but that is not the motive which led Tolstoï to the plough and the shoemaker's bench. He does not hold strongly the arguments of Jean-Jacques in favor of bodily labor. We must work with our hands because life consists in a battle with nature for the means of existence, and physical labor is the law of life. Man finds in the accomplishment of this duty a complete satisfaction for his bodily as well as his spiritual needs. To nourish, clothe, and care for himself and his family satisfies his bodily wants. To nourish, clothe, and care for others becomes a spiritual duty. No form of activity is legitimate that does not seek to gratify the primitive wants of man, for in these rests his very life.

Let us go further. Tolstoï is an idealist. Nature is what we ourselves make it. Nature in its true form is Mind, and the universal Mind is far above the individual personality. Let us recognize individuality as an illusion, and that we are working at an infinite task, which is infinitely beyond us. To put aside our personality and follow the path of renunciation and self-abnega-

tion should be our rule of life. Now, the action in which this idea clothes itself, that in which it takes form, is labor, the secular task that unites all generations of men and makes of the universe a completed harmony, a single being accomplishing a single work.\*

Consequent upon this theory of labor is the belief in the possibility of a paradise in this world, and also a contempt for mere industrial work, the condemnation of commerce, and a hatred of cities, which he calls "truly impure Babylons." We must, says Tolstoï, abandon the cities where there are but consumers and not producers, and renounce those habits of city life which, far from constituting progress, are but the worst forms of corruption.

Again, in adopting this theory of manual labor, the problem of pauperism will be readily solved; we need but to scatter the poor of the cities among the peasants of the country. How, asks Tolstoï, can we leave the village, where we are surrounded by fields, by forests, by grain and herds of cattle, in a word by all the riches of the earth, to seek nourishment where only dust and stones are to be found? †

Live by the work of your hands, "labor for bread," thus Tolstoï and Bondareff advise those who seek a remedy for social evils, and whose

\* See Léon Tolstoï's book entitled *Of Life*, one volume, published by C. Marpon and E. Flammarion.

† *What is my Life?* p. III.

hearts are full of love for humanity and the sentiment of justice.

Tolstoï adds that if there were one, two, three, or ten men, who, without entering upon any personal conflict, without troubling the government, or resorting to revolutionary violence, should solve for themselves this great question which divides the world, it would result in other men's seeing true happiness within their reach; and the hitherto irreconcilable antipathies between conscience and the organization of society would be settled by physical labor. Cruel inequalities would disappear, and it would be as though heaven had descended upon earth.

Science, Political Economy, and all exterior means are powerless to dispel this evil. The only remedy is in an individual moral reform, based upon charity and manual labor. Humanity can change only with the individual's reform. The whole social question is one of morality. To an honest man social reform must come from within. If each of us should avoid sin and cultivate fraternity and Christian charity, there would soon be no need of soldiers, constables, or judges.

Does not this offer an original and powerful incentive to reform society and to save the human race? Is not the reform that Tolstoï advocates possible? He only can doubt it who has not comprehended the true doctrine of Christ, which teaches the renunciation of indi-

vidual life and admits no immortality except that of humanity.

### III.

We have endeavored in few words to portray and to compare the doctrines of Tolstoï and Bondareff. We have shown their tendency and their social results. We have but to add a comment on Bondareff's own book.

Its perusal is highly interesting and suggestive. We find in this peasant a profoundness of thought united with great simplicity of character. Doubtless his ideas are not always expressed with sufficient clearness, which is due to the *biblical* style he has adopted. But this difficulty is easily surmounted, if we read with due attention.

We have endeavored to give his language as precisely and exactly as possible, leaving untouched the style of speech familiar to the Russian peasants, who are indefatigable readers of the Holy Scriptures.

We have sought to explain by notes every serious difficulty that occurred, and to illustrate the texts of Tolstoï and of Bondareff by comparing them with each other.

\* \* \*

I owe thanks to my brother, M. Emile Pagès, who has already translated a work of Tolstoï's (*What is my Life?* one volume, *Illustrated L*

*brary*), and who will soon publish *Wealth and Literature* by the author of *My Religion*, as well as an essay on his life and works. In 1888 he visited the great Russian author at Moscow, and received from him the manuscript of *Labor*, whose translation he entrusted to me, being too much occupied to attempt it himself. That Lyof Tolstoï and the peasant Bondareff may recognize their work as we have translated it will be the best reward of our efforts.

AMÉDÉE PAGÈS.

# LABOR.

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## FIRST PART.

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### *LABOR, AND BONDAREFF'S THEORY.*

BY COUNT LYOF TOLSTOÏ.

THE work which I now offer to the public is by Timothy Michaïlovitch Bondareff. I have made no change in it, except to substitute for Bondareff's peculiar orthography one more generally used in books.

One other difference consists in my division of the work in two parts; reserving under the title of Appendices all that seemed to be a repetition of or digression from the principal subject.

This work is, in my opinion, remarkable for its force and clearness, the beauty of its language, the sincerity of conviction which each line betrays, and, above all, the importance, the truth, and the profundity of its fundamental idea.

The master-thought of the book is this: Un-

der all circumstances of life, it is essential not only to know what is good and necessary, but to know which, among these good and necessary things, is of the first or second importance. This, which is of supreme need in the affairs of life, is still more so in those of religion, for which faith fixes duties of such great import to humanity.

Tatian,\* one of the Fathers of the early

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\* Tatian, an apologist of the second century, attracts the historian by the originality with which he assimilates revealed truths, and the somewhat rude eloquence with which he brands pagan corruption for its lapse from orthodoxy to the Gnostic heresy. He was born in Assyria, as he himself states in his *Discourse to the Greeks*.

Having vainly sought, as well in the popular faith, in the Oriental mysteries, and in the schools of philosophy, for a doctrine that would appease his intellectual doubts and satisfy the more elevated demands of his conscience, he found it ultimately in the Gospel, and described it in his first and most celebrated work, the *Discourse to the Greeks*, as the motive of his conversion. This apology, which would seem to have been written during a sojourn in Rome, is distinguished from all others that were written at that period by the irreconcilable antagonism it portrays between the pretended wisdom of the pagan and the Gospel. On one side all is light; on the other, utter darkness: here stand mythology with its absurd fables whose subtle allegories scarcely conceal their coarseness, art devoted entirely to sensual pleasures, and philosophy with its contradictions and its nothingness; there, Christianity with its simplicity and universality, its purity of life, and the courage in the presence of death with which its followers were inspired.

After the death of Justin Martyr, Tatian returned to Syria, and affiliated himself with one of the numerous sects to which Oriental fervor of imagination gave rise.

As far as can be ascertained where so much controversy existed, Tatian joined the sect of the Encratites, although he

Church, says that the misfortunes of men come less from their ignorance of the true God than from their faith in false gods. This is equally true in regard to men's individual duties. Their misfortunes and crimes result not so much from ignorance of real duty as from admitting false ideas of duty, and from not regarding as their sole duty that which is highest and most clearly established.

Bondareff affirms that the crimes and misfortunes of men result from their accepting as sacred duties precepts that are frivolous and hurtful, while they forget and conceal from themselves and others that which is incontestably the first and most important of duties, and which is contained in the first chapter of Holy Scripture: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." \*

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was not its founder. (E. Strachlin, *Encyclopedia of Religious Science*.)

The best known of his works of that period, the *Diatessaron*, must have been a harmony of the four Gospels of which Eusebius speaks without having seen it. Tatian composed this to expunge from the canonical text the genealogies and other passages which make the Saviour belong to the race of David in the flesh.

\* Tolstoi and Bondareff thus render this verse of Genesis as better expressing the idea of manual labor. It is usually translated, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." We give a passage translated by Reuss from the Hebrew text: "And the Eternal God said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; *in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou*

To those who believe in the sacredness and infallibility of the Divine Word as given in the Bible, it will be evident that this commandment strongly asserts its own truth, since it was given by God and has never been annulled.

As for those who do not believe in Holy Scripture, if they will, without prejudice, consider this precept as a simple and natural expression of human wisdom, they will see clearly its sense and truth if they also examine the conditions of human life: and it is precisely this that Bondareff has done in his book.

They may be prevented making successfully such an examination, because so many are accustomed to the absurd and erroneous explanations that theologians give to the Holy Scriptures. It will need but to recall to them that a doctrine is susceptible of different interpretations, and they will exclaim with disdain: "What do we care for Holy Scripture? We know that whatever one chooses may be based upon it, and that it is all false."

Nothing could be more unjust; for we must not take for Holy Scripture man's mistaken views of it, and he who really speaks the truth may well do so in the words of the Scriptures.

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*shalt eat the herb of the field, in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken, dust thou art. and unto dust shalt thou return."*

We see this interpretation of Tolstoj and Bondareff is not inexact. They have reason to believe that Genesis teaches us that the natural condition of man is to labor in the ground.

If we admit that what we call Holy Scriptures is not the work of God, but of men, and if, on the other hand, while it is purely and simply the work of men, it is regarded as coming from God, let us not forget there is a reason for its continued existence.

It is easy to perceive this reason.

Superstitious men call it God's work because it is more profound than all human science, and because, notwithstanding continual attacks upon its verity, it remains to this day without losing its divine authority. It is called divine, and is transmitted to us, because it contains the greatest possible wisdom. And this is true of the greater part of what we call the Bible.

This in fact, and in a literal sense, is what Bondareff takes for his text, in proclaiming the commandment that the human race has forgotten, or has so interpreted as to destroy its force.

One usually regards this sentence of God and all Adam's life in paradise as a real and historic event, although we should also give it an allegorical aspect, as showing the contrary tendencies that God has placed in human nature.

Man fears death and is subject to it. One who knows of neither good nor evil would seem to us most happy, and yet we are eager to know everything. Man loves the pleasures and the gratifying of his wants which bring no pain with them, and yet it is by pain and suffering that he and all his race attain life.

These words, "Knead thy bread in the sweat of thy face," are important, not only because it is claimed that God himself uttered them to our father Adam, but because they are true, because they affirm an irrevocable law of human existence.

The law of gravitation is not true only because Newton discovered it; but, on the contrary, we know of Newton because he made this discovery, and we are grateful to him for showing us an eternal law which serves to explain a whole class of phenomena.

It is the same with the law, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." It is also a law which explains a whole class of phenomena. Having known it once, we can never forget it, and we are full of gratitude to him who discovered it.

This law would seem to be simple and well known; but that is but a delusion, as we discover on looking around us. Not only is it not recognized, but another that is diametrically opposed to it prevails. All who believe in God, from the emperor to the beggar, seek to evade rather than to obey it.

To show its eternity and immutability, and to explain how its infringement must necessarily result in misfortune, is what Bondareff has undertaken in his book.

Bondareff calls it the primitive law, the first commandment, and places it above all others. He shows that sin and all faults and disloyal

actions belong to those only who break it. In his eyes, the principal of humanity's positive duties, the first and incontestable need of each individual, is *to work with his hands for bread*; he understands by it that each man, by long and painful labor, should preserve himself from dying of cold and hunger, and that he should procure by manual labor food, clothing, warmth, and shelter.

Bondareff's fundamental idea is that this law (man must work to live), now regarded as merely necessary, should be considered as the highest of all. It ought to be held as a religious duty, like observing the Sabbath and circumcision are among the Israelites, fasting and the sacraments among Christians, and the praying five times a day and other practices among the Mahometans.

He claims that if men regarded working for bread as a religious duty, no other occupation would deter them from fulfilling it, even as nothing can deter believers from celebrating the feasts prescribed by their religion.

We have more than eighty feast-days in the year, while working for bread only requires, according to Bondareff's calculation, about forty days.

How extraordinary it seems, at first glance, that a means so simple, so easy to be understood by all the world, and requiring neither skill nor science to accomplish it, should be able to save humanity from all terrestrial evils, no matter

how numerous they may be! But how much more surprising is it that, having in our hands a means so simple, so clear, so long known to all the world, we should neglect it, and seek to cure our woes by various false and subtle theories!

It is acting like one who, instead of putting a new bottom in a broken cask, tries to invent all sorts of artifices to make it hold water. And our efforts to cure our own woes are like these vain artifices.

Whence come, then, all the misfortunes of men, excepting those which result in assassinations, prisons, combats, and all the cruelties of which they become guilty because they cannot forbear to use violence?

All human misfortunes, direct violence excepted, result on the one hand from hunger and privation of all sorts, and from discouragement in labor, and on the other from riches, idleness, and the vices they engender. Ought we not to endeavor to destroy this inequality by which some are plunged into the evils of misery and want, and others into those which belong to the temptations of wealth? How can we do this but by taking part in the labor which satisfies our wants, and in abandoning wealth and idleness, which are the parents of vice and temptation; in other words, in obeying the law which commands men to labor each for his own bread, and to earn their living with their own hands? We are so overwhelmed with the multitude of

religious, social, and domestic laws that are imposed upon us ; we have invented so many commandments in announcing, as Isaiah says, "line upon line, precept upon precept," one rule for this, another for that, that we have lost all clear perception of good and evil. One says mass, another recruits for the army, or collects taxes, a third is a judge, a fourth is a student, a fifth cures disorders, a sixth teaches ; all, in fine, by these or similar pretexts evade the law of labor, leaving it for others, and forgetting that there are around them men who are dying with hunger and fatigue. But before giving the people priests, soldiers, judges, doctors, and professors, we should know that they are not perishing with hunger. Not only do we forget that many duties may present themselves for fulfilment, but also that there is a first and a last duty, and that we cannot undertake the last till the first is fulfilled, any more than we can harrow the ground before it has been ploughed.

It is to accomplish the duty which is the first in practical order that Bondareff's doctrine is given.

Bondareff shows that the accomplishment of this duty does not interfere with any other occupation, presents no difficulties, and saves man from poverty, want, and temptation.

It destroys above all the odious division of man into two classes who hate each other and hide under a veil of humility their mutual dislike.

[Labor for bread, says Bondareff, renders all men equal, and clips the wings of luxury and covetousness.

One cannot cultivate the ground or dig wells in rich clothing, with white hands, or on delicate food.]

By giving themselves up to an occupation that is good and holy for every one, men come nearer to each other. Labor for bread restores intelligence to those who have lost it or have led unworthy lives; and it also bestows joy and happiness; for God and nature have reserved this as a glad and interesting work for mankind.

Labor for bread is a remedy that saves mankind. If men would recognize this primitive law as divine and immutable, and regard labor for bread as an indispensable duty, all would then be nourished by their own work, be united by the same faith in God and in love for one another, and thus destroy the poverty from which so many suffer.

We are so accustomed to a contrary state of affairs, and to regard wealth, freedom from the need to labor, and high social position as gifts of Heaven, that we do not choose to see how unjust and incomplete it is.

Let us analyze it with care, and see if it is just.

There are on this point religious and political theories to suit all tastes. Let us judge Bondareff's theory as a mere theory. Let us consider what would happen if, following Bondareff's wish, all the clergy should undertake in

their sermons to explain this first commandment, and if all men should accept the holy law of labor. What would be the result?

All the world would labor and eat the fruit of their labor, and bread, being an object of necessity, would neither be bought nor sold. What then? No one would die of hunger. If a man could not earn enough for himself and his family, his neighbor would help him. He would do so because he would have no other use for products that he could not sell. It would follow that man would have no more temptations; he would have no occasion to obtain by ruse or violence the bread he could not otherwise procure.

Violence and deceit would not then be necessary as they are now; and he who resorted to them would do so from evil impulse, and not, as now, from want or privation.

Those who are weak and cannot earn their bread would no longer need to sell their labor, and perhaps their souls, to obtain food.

No one would then, as now, seek to escape from the burden of labor or to throw it on others; nor endeavor to crush the feeble with it, while on the strong they heap all manner of work. We would no longer find men devoting all their intellectual forces to facilitate, not labor for laborers, but idleness for the idle.

In taking part in the labor for bread, and in recognizing it as the principal human occupation, we act as one who, seeing a carriage drawn

by fools with the wheels in the air, turned it over and replaced it on its wheels. It then went smoothly.

The life we lead in scorning labor, and in trying to reform it contrary to nature, is as this upset carriage with the wheels in the air. And all our efforts will be vain till we place the carriage in its proper position, and ourselves in ours.

This is Bondareff's doctrine, in which I entirely believe.

Let me further explain his notion.

There was once a time when men devoured each other. The idea of equality gradually developed among them, however, so that this state of affairs did not continue. Thus cannibalism was abandoned.

Then followed a period in which they made slaves of their fellow-beings, and possessed themselves of the fruits of their labor. But in time human consciences became too enlightened for this, and slavery was abolished.

While these gross forms of tyranny have now disappeared, its spirit is still existing beneath hypocritical deceptions. Man no longer openly avails himself of the labor of others without form of recompense. To-day exists another phase of violence: the rich, profiting by the needs of the poor, still enslave them effectually.

But, according to Bondareff, the time is coming when all men will be equal, and one cannot profit by the need of another, or through his

suffering from hunger or cold succeed in enslaving him. Man, admitting that labor for bread is a law imposed on all, will consider it a strict duty not to permit the sale of bread (that is, articles of actual necessity), but will nourish, clothe, and care for each other.

I regard Bondareff's work from another point of view, which is this:

You will often hear it said that we must not be content with negative laws and commandments, that is, the rules which decide what *we must not do*; but we should have positive laws, which determine in a precise manner what *we ought to do*.

For example, Jesus Christ gave five negative commandments:\*

1st. Never regard any one as a fool or idiot; and never be angry with any one.†

2d. Do not look on marriage as a mere source of pleasure. Let not the husband leave his wife, nor the wife her husband.‡

\* Tolstoi's moral law is all contained in these Gospel precepts. See, for the development of this doctrine, and his explanation of the *Sermon on the Mount*, his book entitled *My Religion*.

† "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (St. Matthew, chap. v. 22.)

‡ "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement;

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit

3d. Swear not; do not make promises to any one or for any cause.\*

4th. Submit to offence and violence, and do not resist wicked men.†

5th. Do not regard men as enemies. Love your enemies even as you do your neighbors.‡

It is said these commandments teach us only what we must not do.

It may seem strange that there should not be in the doctrine of Christ a precise commandment as to what we should do. But whoever

adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." (Ibid. v. 31, 32.)'

\* "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said, by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." (Ibid. v. 32-37.)

† "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Ibid. v. 38-39.)

‡ "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:

But I say unto you, Love you renemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Ibid. v. 43-45.)

believes fully in the doctrine of Christ will find there not only these five negative commandments, but also the positive *doctrine of all truth*.

Now, the doctrine of truth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, is found not in laws, not in commandments, but only in the sense by which we understand life.

It teaches that life and its welfare consist not in personal happiness, as many believe, but in serving God and our neighbor. And this is not a duty to be performed for recompense, it is not a mystical expression of hidden and incomprehensible meaning, but a revelation of the law of life hitherto ignored, a demonstration that life cannot be good if it is not given its highest phase.

So the doctrine of Christ and of truth is expressed in these words: Love God, and thy neighbor as thyself.

Christ's direct laws and commandments, and the Judaic and Buddhist precepts, indicate the ways in which the world's temptations turn men from the right way.

Thus, there may be many such laws and precepts, while it needs but one positive rule of life to teach us what to do.

The life of every man consists in following some one aim. Whatever it may be, he tends towards it, as he sees it more or less clearly. Christ has shown us the right way, and how we may be turned aside from it. For this there are many diverging paths, and the five com-

mandments are given to guard us from their errors. But only one precept is needed to show us the right way ; and for those who believe Christ's teaching, and know the true way of life that he has pointed out, no positive laws are needed to enforce his doctrine.

The different actions which result from following the true path of life are clearly defined for those who accept Christ's teaching. They are, to use his expression, as a well of pure water bursting from the soil, and their actions flow naturally from the pure source, in spite of all obstacles.

No man, believing in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, would ask what were his positive duties, any more than the water springing from the earth would ask what it should do. It flows in its abundance to refresh the grass, the trees, and the flowers, while birds, animals, and men partake of its bounty.

Thus the man who accepts Christ's definition of the path of life goes unquestioning on his way straight to the goal. He need not ask what he has to do. Love, which will become the principle of his being, will show him clearly the right path, and what duties belong to the present and future.

[The first and most pressing claims of this work of love are to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to succor the sick, and to visit the prisoners. This is the counsel of Christ as well as of our own hearts. And above all are we

exhorted by reason, by conscience and feeling, to secure to our brother-men their lives, to preserve them from the suffering and death which result from their unequal contest with nature,\* and to urge upon them the labor for bread, the most important and most wearisome of all work, and which is distinctly imposed on all men.]

Even as the spring may not ask where it shall send its waters, whether it shall sprinkle from above the grass and the leaves of the trees, or seek their roots beneath the earth, so a man who knows the doctrine of truth may not ask in advance what he must do, whether he is to teach men, to defend them from the enemy, to amuse them and give them the pleasures of life, or to succor those who perish in want. [A spring does not flow upon the surface, quenching the thirst of animals and filling the ponds,

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\* This idea of an incessant struggle with nature as being man's principal duty and occupation occurs frequently in Tolstoï's works, and notably in *What should be done*. "The first and most undoubted duty of man," he says, "is to partake in the struggle with nature for his own life and his neighbor's." And again: "Whether it results for good or for ill, this is the decree of God, or the law of nature which created man and the world. The situation of man in the world, as we know it, is such that, being naked, without shelter, and unable to find his food in the fields,—like Robinson Crusoe on his island,—he is under the necessity of contending always with nature for food, clothing, and shelter. Food must be prepared to satisfy his own hunger several times in the day, and also that of the children who are too young for labor, as well as of the feeble old folk."

till it has first watered the earth; thus a man, knowing the doctrine of truth, cannot seek to satisfy men's minor needs till he has relieved the greatest want, and has aided to nourish them, and to save them from the death that attends the unequal contest with nature.] The man who professes, not only by words but by actions, the doctrines of truth and love, will not deceive himself as to the object of his life. Never would the man whose idea of existence is to serve others imagine that he can help those who are dying of cold and hunger by making new laws, by casting cannon or working on objects of luxury, or by playing on the piano or violin. Love cannot be so foolish.

Even as love for a person does not consist in reading to him a novel when he is hungry, nor in giving him jewels of great price if he is cold, neither can it consist in amusing those who are satiated, while those who are cold and hungry are left to die in misery. True love, showing itself by actions rather than by words, is far from being wanting in intelligence. On the contrary, it is full of true wisdom and sagacity. So a man inspired by love will not deceive himself; he will accomplish at once the first duty that his love for mankind points out, in carrying succor to those who suffer, or who are cold or hungry. But to aid the famished and unhappy is to fight hand to hand with nature. Only he who is willing to deceive himself and others in the moment of dangerous contest with misery will refuse to aid

them, and will augment their misfortunes, while pretending to those who are perishing before him that he has other occupations by which he will seek a means to save them.

A true man, one for whom life consists in doing good, could not use such language ; and if he made such a response, his conscience would ever reprove the falsehood ; he can find no defence for it save in the crafty and diabolical theory of the *Division of Labor*.\*

Among all the doctrines of human wisdom, from that of Confucius to that of Mahomet, we find this idea strongly expressed only in the Gospel. We there find ourselves convinced of the necessity to aid men, not by a theory of division of labor, but by means that are simple, natural, and indispensable. It is the Gospel which teaches us to minister to the sick, the prisoners, and those who perish with cold and hunger.

But we can only do this directly by at once laboring ourselves, for the sick and the famished

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\* Tolstoï has discussed the theory of the division of labor, showing its disastrous effects, in *What should be done*, at page 104 of the French translation, and those following it.

Without doubt, according to Tolstoï, the division of labor exists in human society, but the question is how to render it just. It has made in our day an admirable progress, but, by some unhappy chance, it has aggravated instead of ameliorating the condition of the greatest number, who are the laborers.

How then shall we make a just distribution of labor ? To preserve life by a manual labor, common to all, is the first duty ; which is to be personally fulfilled, yet in a manner that aids our neighbor also.

are still dying for want of aid. The man who practises the doctrine of truth will demonstrate in his life, that is consecrated to the service of his fellow-men, the primitive law which is formulated in the Book of Genesis: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." This is the primitive law, or the first commandment, as Bondareff calls it, and he shows us that it is a positive law.

This is a law as well for those who have not comprehended the true meaning of life as indicated by Jesus Christ ; for those who lived before him, and also for those who have not believed in him. It is a positive law, exacting from all of us, conformably to God's will, as it is manifested in the Bible and to our intelligence, to support ourselves by labor. It preserves this character even when the true meaning of life, as indicated by the doctrine of truth, is unknown to men.

But where men well know this aim of life as pointed out by Jesus Christ, the law of labor for bread will become part of Christ's positive doctrine (to love one another), and will then have a negative and not a positive meaning.

When men comprehend the true Christian doctrine, this law will show them the old temptations which they must avoid, that they be not turned from the true path.

To a believer in the Old Testament who does not recognize the doctrine of truth, this law has the following meaning: "Work for bread with your own hands."

But to the Christian its signification is negative. It says to him: "Do not believe you can do good to mankind while overwhelming them with labor for others, and while not earning your food with your own hands."

It shows to the Christian one of the oldest and most criminal temptations that have assailed mankind. Against this temptation, that is so fatal in its consequences, and which we recognize with difficulty as deceitful and contrary to human nature, Bondareff's book is directed. His words are as obligatory to the believer in the Old Testament as to him who accepts the Gospel, to the man who rejects Scripture and relies on his own reason, as to him who comprehends the doctrine of truth.

Reader, dear brother, whoever thou art, I love thee! Far from seeking to grieve thee, or to bring evil or offence into thy life, I wish only to serve thee.

I desire to prove fully the truth of this thesis, to refute all the objections that are made against it; but I might write at greatest length and with utmost talent, I might give the most logical reasons, and yet I could not convince thee, if thy spirit contends with mine, and thy heart remains cold and insensible.

One thing I should fear, lest, in disputing with thee, the pride and coldness of my own spirit should overshadow thine, and I should thus harm thee. Then let us not reason. I only ask of thee one thing: do not discuss or demonstrate the matter, but only question thine own heart.

[Whoever thou art, whatever may be thy qualities, however good thou art, in whatever condition thou art placed, canst thou take tranquilly thy tea and eat thy dinner, canst thou occupy thyself with politics, fine arts, science, medicine, or teaching, when thou seest and hearest the man who is lying at thy door sick and starving? No! But thou wilt say, they are not always there at my door. It may be so; but they are perhaps but a short distance away from thy house, and thou knowest it. Then thou canst not live tranquilly; whatever may be thy joy, it is poisoned by this knowledge. Not to see those who are miserable, thou mayest barricade thy doors, and drive them afar off, or fly thyself to a retreat where there may be no danger of finding them. But they are everywhere. And if thou couldst find a place where thou canst not see them, canst thou escape thine own conscience? What then is to be done?

Thou knowest, and Bondareff's book proves it, that thou must descend into the depths, or what appear to thee to be the depths, but which are really the heights. Join thyself to those who feed the hungry and shelter them from the cold. Fear nothing. Far from being worse, thy new estate will be better than that which preceded it. [Place thyself on the level of others; undertake, with thy feeble and unaccustomed hands, the work of nourishing and clothing the needy; labor for bread, contend with nature, and for the first time thou wilt feel the ground firmly

with thy feet, thou wilt be filled with a sense of independence, liberty, and strength; thou wilt no longer think of flying, but thou wilt taste, with a pure joy, innocent pleasures of which the world has never given thee the least notion. Thou wilt know at last those strong, simple-hearted men, thy own brothers, who, notwithstanding the distance at which they have hitherto stood apart from thee, have always nourished thee.]

To thy great satisfaction, thou wilt see in them virtues hitherto unknown; thou wilt find in them a modesty and goodness of which thou wilt feel unworthy. Instead of scorn and hatred from those that wait upon thee, thou wilt receive gratitude and respect, because, after having lived by their services all thy life, thou wilt now remember their miseries and endeavor with feeble hands to succor them. Thou wilt find that the islet on which thou didst seek refuge from the flood that would have engulfed thee is but a heap of rubbish, whilst the seeming sea thou didst fear is the earth itself. Thou wilt now tread it with bold, tranquil, and joyous feet.

It will be thus with thee, because in abandoning the dark, false ways in which thou hast been wandering unwittingly and against thy true intention, thou wilt now enter upon the path of truth and life. Having hitherto disobeyed God's will, thou wilt now faithfully accomplish it.

LYOF TOLSTOÏ.

Moscow, March, 1888.

## SECOND PART.

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### *LABOR, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE.*

BY THE PEASANT BONDAREFF.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—*Genesis*, iii. 19.

BEFORE undertaking to treat with all my energy of the questions of labor and idleness, let me explain who I am. Am I not like those who, in pointing out to others the good path they should follow, wander themselves in that which is evil, and most opposed to equity and righteousness?

Up to the age of thirty-seven years I worked as a laborer on the estate of a pomestchik\* on the Don, named Tchernozouboff. Every one knows how one in that condition of life is overburdened with work. Later the pomestchik enrolled me as a soldier, and my five children, being under age, remained beneath his heavy, intolerable yoke.

When I arrived in Siberia, in 1857, with my wife and two children, we possessed only the clothes on our backs, and those had been given us by the State.

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\* The proprietor of an estate.

But within fourteen years I have acquired a small cottage with a bit of ground, so that I am as well off as though I had always remained a peasant.

And how did I accomplish this? Simply by cultivating the ground. And this is the way in which I labored. When they reaped the grain, where it takes two laborers to bind the sheaves after the reaper, I did it alone, in spite of my sixty-five years of age, and the work was well done, the sheaves strongly bound. God is my witness, reader, that I tell only the truth.

You will thus see that, while with you in the great world the superiority is given to the general, with us it is gained by the good workman.

In strict justice, I should then have the right to be seated by the side of the general. By his side, do I say? He ought to remain standing before me.

And why? asks the alarmed reader. Because the general eats the bread produced by my labor, since the reverse is not true: and this I will presently show in my justification.

The reader now knows who I am.

Have I then no reason to speak and write of labor and of idleness? I have it truly, and will use it.

If, among the developments and reasonings that follow, any be found that seem useless or even hurtful, I desire they shall be ignored. They will not result from an evil intention; it is

that to the weakness of my mind, they have wrongfully seemed to contain some interest.

You, of the higher classes, write your thousands of books. Are they less mistaken or hurtful than mine? And yet yours are approved and published.

But we, of the lower class, write this little essay for all time and in self-defence, and doubtless you will reject it, as I have been assured you will, claiming that it possesses neither talent nor eloquence. It will be great injury to us, and even to God; and I know with great certainty that Heaven will one day come to our side if you thus reject the bread of life, which is the truth.

[Can you deny this truth, and live without food? No! In an hour you would stretch out your hand to the tree of life which is forbidden to you,—to gather the bread earned by another's labor, and to carry it away with you. That deserves thought.]

Therefore I pray you, reader, to have pity on yourself; give due thought to this question, and you will be reasonable. If others refuse to examine it, you will not be responsible.

Do I expect a recompense for the trouble I am taking? Is it for that that I labor and write? No; I expect but punishment for it, as the rich have assured me.

If you would address your reproaches, say they, to an inferior class, you would receive a recompense; but since you stab to the quick

persons of importance, you will not escape punishment any more than you will death itself.

But what may perhaps save you will be that they will destroy this work.

One must have an aim, I have replied. For the truth we profess we must be willing to suffer, and even to die. But it may be that their fault is the gravest, and that for them will be the severest punishment, as we will show presently.

So I have answered the idle ones who have predicted for me terrible sufferings. It might be for my interest to speak in allegory, but I will not; be they angry or no, I will still take the straight path.

Many rich ones, having read my writings, are offended by them. "You write," they say, "not against the world, but against us only."

Therefore, in the name of the God of truth, I pray you, reader, not to imagine likewise. I have written, in the name of all laborers, against those, whoever and how many soever they may be, who do not produce the bread they eat by the labor of their own hands.

All my writings may be condensed in two sayings:

1. Why, according to the first commandment, do you not labor for the bread that you eat, instead of eating that which the labor of others has produced?

2. Why, in both secular and theological books, are not the laborer and his work com-

mended, instead of being treated with extreme contempt?

To state these questions ought to be enough. But as you condemn manual labor in every way, I must write at greater length, on the subject.

To conclude, I pray you, reader, not to eat for two days before judging my book.

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The human race is divided into two classes: one is noble and honored, the other humble and despised. Those belonging to the first are richly clothed, possessing tables well furnished with exquisite dishes, and they are majestically seated in places of honor; but those belonging to the second are covered with rags, their strength exhausted by poor food and hard work, and they have an air of sorrowful humility, as they remain standing on the threshold: these are the poor laborers.

The truth of my words is confirmed by the parable in the Gospel. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." (St. Luke xvi. 19-21)

Well! I will speak to my companions, the laborers who stand on the threshold: Why do

you stay there always, as silent as so many quadrupeds? Without doubt one should be silent before a man of greater merit, but we should know wherefore and to what extent we are to be silent, and not humble ourselves basely, or adore him as an idol.

Thus, in the name of this latter class, I address myself to the former, and I say: Reply to the questions I will ask.

1. Adam, for having infringed God's command; "Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree," lost paradise not only for himself, but for all his race unto the end of the world. We see by that that he was guilty of a great sin, but we must not believe that his crime consisted merely in eating the forbidden fruit, that is, the apple.

2. Then he tried to hide himself among the trees of the garden, as the Scripture recites.

But from whom would he hide? Men did not yet exist. From God, then.

Behold, then, the madness in which sin had plunged man! Could he hide from the eyes of God? We see that, having recognized his fault, he waited to receive his punishment, and this is God's unexpected decree:

"For having disobeyed the command I gave you, behold your punishment: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

3. Ought not Adam, then, to have shed tears of gratitude towards God for the great mercy

shown him? What was this punishment to that which he might have looked to receive?

4.—May we then believe that Adam labored for nine hundred and thirty years, and that he eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, living by the work of his hands, although he was a noble, according to his time, since he is the father of the human race?

5. Did he desire dominion, or any power whatever? No. For though he listened in paradise to the words of the serpent, who said to him and to his wife, “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,”—that is, you shall live like pomestchiks, and you will be the most intelligent beings in the world,—they nevertheless so lost spirit as to seek concealment from God.

Following the counsel of the serpent, Adam hoped to live in the world without labor; but he was, on the contrary, condemned to seek his nourishment in the sweat of his face, and instead of being elevated to a supreme rank, he lost his birth-place, and in exile was poor and without shelter. Thus to him the serpent became a horrible creature, to whose frightful influence he owed his own loss and that of all his race.

6. Thus you will see, reader, what is the result of this desire for possessions.

And what must we think of one who thus gains possessions, that is, who can be sheltered beneath an umbrella, having white hands, and who during all his life eats the bread that

others have earned? The solution of this enigma is beyond the limits of reason.

I know that you have already a crowd of objections to make to my ideas, but do not criticise them, I pray, till you have heard me to the end.

7. Did Adam hope for a moment, by means of money that did not yet exist, or by any other subterfuges whatever, to turn over his labor to strange hands, to remain himself under an umbrella, and wait for the results of others' labor, like a beggar or a drone? Thus many do in these days, who regard it as a great crime to take from any one a blade of straw or a grain of corn, but who do not think it a crime to take and eat the food, earned by others, which is served at their tables.

8. But if our father Adam received a punishment in proportion to his crime, and submitted to it willingly,—in other words, if he labored with his hands to the end of his life, as is said, "Thou shalt return to the ground, whence thou wast taken,"—we see that he is now innocent, and has atoned to God for his crime.

9. Holy Scripture again says: "For then Adam will stretch out his hand and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and will live forever." It has been supposed this means literally the tree on which Christ was crucified. But that is an arbitrary supposition. Can we admit that to the merits of another, of Christ, that man, who

has no merit of his own, obtains pardon for his sins? That notion was evidently invented to strengthen the hope that we may without labor, and while resting at ease, inherit eternal life.

But if this tree represents Adam's penance, and means the duty of laboring for bread, then a severe task is imposed on ourselves.

Is not, then, my interpretation just, by which, if Adam ate the bread his own hands had earned, he should then, and then only, *live* throughout all ages?

For example, if no one stretches out his hand towards the tree of life, that is, to labor for bread, what would become of most of us? In that case, could the world itself *exist*?

We see, then, clearly that we, who are laborers, are near the tree of life, but you, who will not labor, are near the tree of death. Have I spoken justly? One must, at least, acknowledge that my conclusions are true.

10. Thus it is evident that if Adam by his punishment has won forgiveness of his crime towards God, that penitence ought also to atone for the sins of his whole life.

But as man continues to sin against God as long as he lives, this chastisement is decreed: "To dust shalt thou return."

Is this just?

11. And you of the higher classes, which are but branches of the same trunk, why will you not, in all your existence, submit to this penance, and why must you eat several times in the

day? Are you not as miserable as I am, and as are the laborers, my companions?

But as you are above us, you are more intelligent and better educated, and yet you commit the greatest of all crimes in the sight of God and the world.

You say, "We work harder than the laborer; and it is with the money gained by our labor that we buy bread."

We will speak of that presently.

12. We see by what has been said that we vainly consider how we should atone for our sins, for God knows what treatment should be prescribed for our illnesses or wrong-doings, and he has prescribed this; only we should accept it with sincere ardor, and not use divers pretexts to evade its application.

Is this true?

13. But if we, Adam's posterity, have inherited his sin, and share in the penance attached to it, and if we are really more guilty than Adam, because he did not know all that we have been taught, then we ought not to try to escape that punishment, nor to evade the penance which God himself decreed for Adam and his posterity. Each of us should labor to gain his bread with his own hands, whether he be rich or poor, and whatever may be his merit or rank, excusing only the sick or aged persons who are too feeble to work.

14. Doubtless, if we do not examine manual labor attentively, the duty of earning our nour-

ishment, and their respective merits, they will not seem of sufficient value to atone for all our sins, and to render us innocent in the sight of God. Because if we work only for ourselves, what recompense can we expect?

I have already said what this recompense is, and I will repeat it.

But if the merit of labor seems to you insufficient, you will be little disposed to accomplish it, even if an angel came down from heaven to explain it.

15. You see, then, how Adam atoned for the first sin. But it has been asserted that he was for that exiled to hell during five thousand five hundred years, and that he suffered there till Christ delivered him.

But this is certainly an interpretation contrary to the law. And why do you assert what is not conformable to law? Is it to be delivered from "these abominable occupations," and to live like a *pomestchik*? But if it is just to believe that Adam owes his deliverance to manual labor, then let us devote ourselves assiduously to that duty. Is it just?

[16. I ask, then, why God did not prescribe to Adam as a penance our most esteemed virtues, such as fasting, prayer, partaking of the sacraments, etc. Why did he, instead, direct this labor in which men of education can find no virtue, but who regard it as almost a vice? Why is this?]

17. From the developments thus far reached,

it would seem that Adam belonged to our class, to that which is inferior and ignorant : he knew not how to read, to write, nor to speak elegantly. God gave him an occupation which suited his spirit ; and he, being weak, submitted to it. But God orders now the same duty for men who are instructed in Scriptures and by the voice of conscience ; and these make a thousand objections to it, which God himself would not know how to answer.

[18. Till now, we have spoken only of Adam's penance, and not that of Eve. Could not God in the beginning have created many thousands of people? Why did he create only these two, the husband and the wife, Adam and Eve? Evidently because in human life there are two principal affairs, two duties of equal value and importance : the one, that of motherhood ; the other, that of manual labor. God said to Eve : " I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception : in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." And he said to Adam : " In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread ; and thou shalt return to the ground whence thou wast taken." ]

19. Now I ask why, in the woman's penance only, there is no hidden meaning or allegory, but it is accomplished literally, as God pronounced it? The woman who lives in a poor hut and the empress on her throne, wearing a crown on her head, have the same destiny : they " bring forth children in sorrow." There

is no difference between them. No: they bring forth children in such sorrow that it often costs them life itself.

Is this true?

20. But the woman of the higher class may say: "I have not time for maternal duties. They would take me from urgent affairs of state, and occasion more loss than profit. And then, why should I descend to the level of the meanest peasant? Let me rather pay another with gold to undertake this duty for me, or I will buy a new-born child which will belong to me as though it were my own." Can she do this, and carry out such plans? \*

21. No, that cannot be done; we cannot change the order established by God.

You may give all the treasures in the world to purchase a child, but it will not then be your own. It never has been yours, and never can be. It belongs only to its own mother.

It is the same with the question of food. A man may neglect the duty of laboring for bread, he may buy a loaf with money; but that loaf

\* Bondareff's ideas, as given above, have inspired several passages in Tolstoi's *What should be done*.

"Thou shalt earn thy bread, he says (page 216 of the French translation), in the sweat of thy face, and thou shalt bring forth children in sorrow.

"But we have changed all that! as exclaimed Molière's character, who proclaimed that the liver is on the left side. Men no longer must labor for food: that will be done by machinery; and women need no longer bear children. The world will not now be overcrowded with people."

still belongs to the person whose labor earned it. 7

For even as a woman cannot purchase motherhood with money or in any other way, so a man ought by the work of his own hands to procure the necessary food for his own subsistence and that of his wife and children. He cannot elude the obligation by any means, whatever may be his rank or merit.

22. No species of animals, of birds, or of reptiles, nothing that lives in the air or on the earth, can escape the destiny God has planned for it. Man alone, the most educated and intelligent of beings, attempts it. And how does he excuse the attempt? Will he have recourse anew to the falsehood: "I work more than the laborer, and I buy my bread with the money I have earned by my work?" Let him abandon this excuse which is so false! For he may buy everything in the world with money excepting only bread.

23. I ask once more, why is the penance inflicted on woman to be literally fulfilled, according to God's command, and only man's penance to be considered allegorical? What excuses, falsehoods, and pretexts can you offer that are not so many refutations in themselves of your views? "This command," says the educated and intelligent man, "does not say I must work in the field with scythe, harrow, or flail. I eat my bread in the sweat of my face. That suffices." And a simple, ignorant man like me will

believe that he is right and that he is perfect. And for the third time I ask for an answer to this question: **W**hy is woman's penance to be taken literally, while man's is regarded as an allegory?

24. Again, God says to the woman, according to the Scriptures: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." One sees here that there can be no other meaning for her penance. The sorrows of motherhood are beyond description; the heart only can comprehend them. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Now all this occurs as it is written in the Scriptures. Then why, if the duty of the laborer's wife is literally expressed, should it be regarded as allegorical with the woman of the educated class?

25. How I regret the want of eloquence! I feel all the truth and value of this reasoning, and yet, for want of eloquence, I can only express it weakly and obscurely. But this hope sustains me, that if gold can be rescued from the very mire, so much more shall bread won by labor be preserved, which is so much better known and so much dearer to us than gold.

26. God said to the woman: "Thou shalt not work to earn thy food, but thou shalt bring forth children in sorrow." Why, then, do our women work? Reader, while waiting till you have found an answer to this, I will myself reply to it.

You who eat in idleness the food we have

worked for are, in Russia, of the number of about thirty millions; but if our wives are not to work, as says the commandment, what would happen? Just one thing: the world would perish with hunger.

So we see clearly and certainly that our wives work for you, and accomplish your task: you eat the fruit of their labor. I wonder that you do not fear the justice of God. But I forget that you buy your food with money.

Do you think that excuses you?

27. If a woman should destroy her children, would she not merit severe punishment for violating God's commandment against murder?

And should not men be equally punished for violating the command God has given them? It has been said: if they will not work, neither should they eat. But no, they eat several times a day with avidity; without that they could not live.

28. [A woman who has destroyed her child does penance all her life. From her soul she implores pardon of God, and to her dying hour she will fast and pray in penitence for her sin. Thus she may hope to obtain forgiveness from God for her crime.]

But thou, reader, dost thou repent all thy life for having eaten the bread that another has earned? Dost thou ask pardon of God and man? No, thou dost not even think of it; thou art only proud of thy wealth, thou livest well, and thinkest to owe God nothing.

29. To woman, who is weaker than man, God has given an imperative duty. We also of the lower class, being weaker than thou in spirit, have an imperative duty.

But thou, being better educated and more intelligent than we are, dost as thou wilt in the matter. If thou choosest to do so, thou wilt labor with thy hands, but not otherwise ; and no one can compel thee to work.

Since thou knowest thy duty, and leavest it for others to fulfil, we may judge thee without mercy, for thou dost not act in ignorance. As for me, who have all my life eaten my own bread, and nourished others through my labors, I show perhaps a poor spirit, but I have thus gained God's forgiveness.

30. One may ask why this commandment which transcends in importance all others, should be unknown among men.

I think the cause is as follows:

If it were given to laborers to explain the law, they would give it its full extent and meaning. Then all the emperors, kings, and princes would comprehend that the first and most sacred duty is that of laboring with one's hands. Then the lower classes, which are now so oppressed, could take breath, and could carry in their hearts the key of all laws, "Do not covet what belongs to thy neighbor."

31. Those who explain our laws scarcely know what grain is, or how it is produced ; thus they

have overlooked its value, and the labor required for its production :

Because, in the light of this law, all religious practices which are easy of accomplishment, and exact no labor, would lose their force and fall into disuse ;

And also because he who explains a law should exemplify it by his example, and in setting those white hands to work, they would be found incapable of such labor.

For all these reasons this law has slumbered, and has been, as it were, consigned to a living tomb, whence it will not be resurrected to the end of the world.]

32. If this commandment, the first which God has given us, which promotes all the virtues, and whence we derive all eternal good, whether earthly or heavenly, were duly comprehended, men would so cherish the cultivation of the ground that a father would give this order to his son : “ When I am at the point of death, carry me into the field of grain, that my soul may there leave my body ; and in that same field inter my remains.”

But now, what happens ?

The man who labors expects no recompense from God ; and he who uses the fruits of another’s labor looks for no punishment.

33. If, I repeat, this commandment were comprehended, how ably you would assist your laborers in their work ! They would then do so

well that one acre would produce what is to-day gathered from five.

But how shall we make you accept this law? If it were we who failed in obeying it, you could compel us to respect it; but if it is you who have withdrawn from its obligation, as the prodigal son of the Gospel left his father's house, who is able to recall you to your duty?

For we are, in your estimation, but as ciphers without units to give them value, as certain mighty ones have said of us.\*

And why would you abase us in this way? Is it only because we nourish you?

34. [God could certainly have found some other way to fertilize the ground and to make it produce grain, but he has made this labor the penance for our sins. In other words, man could not help sinning, and must labor for his own support, and it is by this labor that God permits us to atone for our sins.]

But you, neglecting this precious remedy, and burying it in a tomb, where the inhabitants of the earth may not find it, you decide that faith in God alone can save you.

Satan also believed in God, and obeyed him, as we see in the Book of Job, ii. 1-3.

\* It might be believed that we invented this, and that no one had so spoken of us. But the appellation has been given us many times. It is thus we might reply to it:

You, then, are as the unit 1, and we the cipher 0. But as we are bound to your service, you must unite these figures, 1 and 0, which make 10. Thus we are as nine to one. (Author's note.)

You have made labor for bread a secondary virtue; and you will be severely punished by God, and judged without mercy, because for thousands of years you have hidden this law under a bushel, and have slain a living thing. Read all the books in the world, and you will in them never find labor or the laborers held in the least esteem. They are classed below all else. And yet it is to the laborer that you must go to buy bread, and its productions depends on his good-will. Reflect on that.

35. All the crimes that are committed on the earth, such as thefts, assassinations, frauds, pillage, exactions, etc., result from the concealment of this law from men.

The rich man will do all in the world to escape this odious occupation; the poor man is eager to throw it off. But explain to men its importance and virtue, and all crime will cease forever, while men will be delivered from poverty and misery, because every one will do his best to fulfil this duty to God.

I remember well that, fifty years ago, the money tax was four roubles a head, the custom-house dues were trifling, and the king's treasury was well filled.

To-day, the money tax is thirty-five roubles a head, and all others are ten times as much as formerly; the number of persons liable to be taxed is doubled, and yet they complain that the amounts collected are insufficient. Thus it may be foreseen that in fifty years more the tax will

be increased to one hundred roubles a head, and the people will all be ruined.

And why? Because every one wishes to be elegantly attired, without working for it. On all sides you offend us in an insupportable manner. People have become tricky and given to intrigue; they love to deceive; and thus, having no claim on the treasury for the least sum, they will assert that it owes them not five but ten thousand kopecks, and they will receive them.

In the last days of March 1883 I learned that capital punishment had been re-established. I trembled at this news. As one chops meat with a blunted axe, so strikes the executioner. It is better to kill outright than to torture in this fashion.

I asked myself often what was the best way for the executioner to accomplish his duty.

If there is no other way, if we cannot by any possibility constrain men to do right, then we must, against our will, consent to shed their blood.

But there is a means, a decisive remedy for crime, to be found in God's most ancient law. For it was not without intention that God has not imposed any command before this, nor that he has not ordered us to avoid any vice except neglect of labor.

We thus see that labor embraces all virtues, while idleness and luxury, on the contrary, produce all vices. If, then, a malefactor is found

among laborers, it is because he does not observe this law.

We must not deny that other works have merit, but they are only to be considered after one has earned his nourishment with his own hands.

You have permitted the executioner to flog men, but what men? Evidently us only. He touches not the rich man, who has for his defence friends, eloquence, cunning, and, above all, money. We have no such advantages.

Of course the rich man must expiate his crime, if the affair reaches the ears of supreme authority. But it is usually smothered from the beginning. It is said in *Deuteronomy*: "Presents dazzle the judges' eyes."

Of all the petitions I would make to you the dearest to my heart is this: Do not crush the poor while sparing the rich. And if you must crush any, begin with the head rather than the tail. Think of my argument against your custom of shedding human blood. Let the executioner disappear from among men, and let even his name become unknown in all the world.

36. But will not the baser sort among the people say, Here are such and such ones who live on the labor of others, why may not I do likewise?

Then I will rob, slay, and exact the uttermost penny; I will live like a pomestchik, with my hands in my pockets; I will command, and no longer obey. For it is not by honest labor that you acquire your fine houses. "Honest labor

will not make you rich, but hunchbacked; if you do not sell your soul to the devil, you will not make money." \*

And you will condemn such a man and exile him to Siberia, when you are yourselves the sole cause of his crimes.

37. You see now, reader, how much evil there is in this wrong, this neglect of labor for bread. You see the evil that white hands may do, and the good that labor-stained ones can cause to spring from the earth. You see, in fine, the good result of making known this commandment.

Have good writers given themselves much trouble to explain and teach it? They should have shown how useful is its observance, how wrong its evasion. They should have endeavored, by speech and writing and by religious ceremonies, to exhort all the world to manual labor. That would be worth a thousand times more than founding a faith on the works and merits of Christ alone, and of abandoning the task prescribed by God. It would be well if writer and preacher should set the example; but how can we make people labor who find it so great a fatigue to carry their food to their mouths?

38. If I were, in truth, a man who would avoid labor, and who knew nothing of it, and still sought to impose these opinions on others, every one would have the right to spit in my face, and

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\* Russian proverb.

to treat me with disdain. And if I had hitherto been held in esteem among men, I might well be henceforth treated as a nobody.

This is the reason why writers have never spoken of this commandment, nor ever will speak of it to the end of the world.

Adam committed a crime. God punished him according to the greatness of his fault, as we see in Holy Scripture, and he thus gained forgiveness from God. Why, then, should tradition say that he was sent to hell for five thousand five hundred years?

The New Testament makes no allusion to this exile. Whence, then, comes the legend? If it is true, God, in imposing on him the penance of labor, deceived Adam by a false promise. For if this labor was of no utility to Adam, if, after enduring all its fatigues during his life, he was condemned after death to the torments of hell, every one would exclaim, "Is this the recompense God gives us for our labor?" If that be true, what can we do? How shall we act? How must we live? by robbery and murder?...

And then you invent new laws, you have need of the executioner, you brand men with hot irons, you send them into exile, women remain widows, and orphans become in their turn a prey to vice and crime.

And whose is the fault?

Evidently his who has concealed, and continues to conceal, the law of labor.

39. If there were in the world a man having

over you the same power that you hold over us, he might permit you—though with reluctance and much gnashing of teeth—to live without manual labor. But you excite envy in the laborers; and in displaying the idleness of your life, you weaken the hands that are devoted to labor. Instead of helping them, the sight of your idleness discourages their work, and even tempts them to commit crimes.

What a pity there is not such a man in authority over you! For we hear the cry, “God is in heaven, and the Czar afar off.”

40. We may see, by what has been said and by what follows, that the man who eats the bread he has earned by his own labor is happy in this world and blessed in the world to come.

But the contrary happens to him who consumes the results of another’s labor. No other virtue can save him, because he has disobeyed the principal commandment, and obedience to others cannot supply a remedy.

41. All the products of the earth are bought and sold at their price, which is neither more nor less than is suitable, and each merit has its own recompense. But when our labor, that is, our bread, is taken from us for nothing, we are neither paid nor recompensed. Why is not our labor paid, you ask, reader? Must I, then, repeat the same thing ten times over?

42. Tell me, I pray you, conscientiously, will you labor for your bread as much as thirty days in the year? Does that seem impossible to you?

Is it because you cannot, or that you will not do this? Tell me sincerely.

43. Labor for bread is a sacred duty for each of us, and we should not make excuses to avoid it. The more a man is educated, the more he owes the example of labor, neither pretending to discover obstacles to it, nor abandoning it altogether.

44. Ought I to seek theological proofs because I desire your salvation? No, but because only that theology offers good reasons in favor of labor; and because, also, people of my class believe firmly in God, in a future life, and in the Holy Scriptures. When they hear these words they will eagerly grasp this, and all other kinds of labor, like those who are dying of hunger and thirst.

45. Then the dark night will become to them as the bright day, the passing storm will reveal a serene sky, cold will become warmth, and old age will blossom into a flourishing youth.

Therefore I draw from the Holy Scriptures the arguments therein contained, but I do not address them to you.

Who will read these articles to the people? You have not the right to do so. Must you persuade the laborers themselves to read them? That is impossible, for in so doing you will commit a grave error.

46. As the proverb says, "we have not every day a feast," but on the contrary it is always Lent. We should always instruct others to be

pleasing to God and useful to society. But the time has come when we have but to ask this question: Why do you teach others, when you cannot teach your own selves? As is said in the same sense, "You place upon the shoulders of men heavy burdens, that you would not so much as touch with your little finger." We must set the example of virtue, and encourage people to cultivate it, lest the scythe in cutting the grass shall become broken against a stone.

47. O ye who belong to the upper classes of society, reflect on this: If all the laborers in the world should abandon labor for bread as you do, then every one would die of hunger. Do you admit that we could do this with as much reason as you do?

We do not rest, you say, we work unceasingly. We do not eat food without paying for it with the money we have earned by our work, and we give the price that the laborer demands. We eat our bread in the sweat of our face.

And if we all work, where will the poor get their money? We give it them, and they give us bread. We live by them, and they by us. We cannot govern and direct others, and at the same time labor with our hands.

The commandment given to Adam applies not only to labor for bread, but to all our other occupations. Even as we cannot live without bread, we cannot live without the things with which we occupy ourselves. God, in creating the world, intended that we should labor at dif-

ferent sorts of work. Man amasses wealth to get rid of this uncongenial labor. In short, it is impossible to be occupied with many affairs at once.

I have no rest; night and day I have my occupations, I have scarcely the time to eat food already prepared. If we too must labor for bread, then the universe must of necessity perish. I have plenty of money, and I use it in great enterprises without labor, and yet you want me to go into the fields and torture myself for thirty kopecks a day! I would be regarded as a simpleton. I prefer to work with my money at home.

But if all the world must labor, let those begin who are a hundred times richer than I!

48. These are the pretexts and objections that you make to the law; these are the reasons why you who belong to the upper class would decline to labor for bread. If all of us laborers did the same, would you admit it as a justification when the plea is made by us?

No; but with your absolute power, you would smother us and our reasons together.

But, I ask you, why do you look upon your excuses as legitimate?

Bring together a number of men belonging to the great world, who waste their thoughts on its vanities, and ask them what answer you ought to make to this question.

49. Bread should be neither bought, nor sold, nor used in traffic. You cannot with bread heap up riches, for its value is beyond human es-

timation. It is only in certain cases that it may be given away, as to hospitals, to orphanages, to prisoners, to countries ruined by bad harvests, to people deprived of everything in a fire, to widows, to orphans, to the infirm and aged, and to those who have no homes.

50. This law is ignored in the world, as we have seen, and as I will show you further. They might have placed it among virtues of less importance, but they have not even accorded it that much honor.

Nature herself leads the laborer to seek the highest good ; that is to say, bread.

But if, not content only to see that it is indeed an excellent thing, he can penetrate Nature's profound mysteries, he will then realize what has been said in the preceding article. It will no longer be said, "Give me bread," but rather, "Take of my bread," and I do not believe any man will enjoy eating the bread that another has prepared.

But at present, what must be done? You have put away this commandment as one plunges a stone into the depths of the sea, so that its name and its memory are lost to the world. God will judge between us and you.

51. Here are some objections that a rich man has made to me : "How can you say that it is forbidden to buy and sell bread, and to make a profit by the traffic? Besides that which historians relate, we see in the Holy Scriptures that bread was bought and sold and used in traffic,

yet in spite of that, they sinned not against God. You maintain also that bread cannot be exchanged for money ; that we must absolutely labor for it with our hands. It is an evident absurdity. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other ancestors of the human race were rich, and had their slaves, both male and female. We must conclude that they did not work themselves, but ate bread produced by the labor of others ; and yet they were not for that reason held guilty before God.

52. And to prove more strongly the falsity of your assertions, the two great legislators, Moses and Jesus Christ, have never spoken of this commandment. When Moses wrote : " Knead thy bread in the sweat of thy face," he referred to all occupations. This must be the sense we are to give to his words, if we remember that Moses lived for forty years at the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, without working. During the following forty years, he herded sheep in the pastures of his father-in-law Jethro, in the land of Midian\* ; but he did not labor for bread. During forty other years he commanded the Israelites in the Wilderness, without laboring. Thus he never labored. Nevertheless, God accepted him, loved him, and placed him above all other prophets ; but, according to you, Moses was a parasite.

53. It is the same with Jesus Christ. He is

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\* " Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian." ' Exodus iii. 1.'

himself God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and it was he who judged Adam in paradise; but instead of "Knead thy bread in the sweat of thy face," he says in the Gospel, "Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; but God feedeth them."

Do you not, then, see that labor for bread is of slight benefit, nor has it in this life even utility? It is indeed the most useless of all labor, and God imposes it on the idle.

54. And furthermore, show me a laborer whom God has admitted into heaven for his work's sake. We do not know if the prophets were rich, but neither do we know that they were poor. But as their books were approved, we may conclude they were rich, because a poor man's book would never be approved, no matter how useful it might be.

To this Sirach, a man inspired by God, bears witness when he says: "The rich man uttereth a folly, and all are silent, his words are vaunted to the skies. The poor man speaks reasonably, and instead of approving him, they say, 'Who art thou?' \*"

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\* "If the rich man is deceived, every one helps him; if he speaks insolently (if he reveals what should have been a secret), he is justified. But if the poor man is deceived, he is reproached; if he speaks wisely, he is not listened to.

"When the rich man speaks, all are silent, and they vaunt his words to the skies. When the poor man speaks, they say, Who art thou? (they reproach him with his poverty, and force him to be silent.) And if he makes a mistake, they will pass it over." (Ecclesiasticus xiii. 26. Translated by Sacy.)

It is true Jesus Christ calls the poor "his brethren," but this is only to encourage them, lest they fall into despair. The proof of this is that He himself frequented only the houses of the rich, and never entered those of the poor.

55. My adversary continues by saying: When Noah came into the world, his father Lamech said: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." (Genesis v. 29.)

And thus we are delivered from the curse of labor; but you, the laborers, are still kept under it; and it must be hoped that God will not condemn you, because our class has trampled you under its feet. And is that a sin in God's eyes? No, for it has been God's will that it should be so.

56. It is further written in the Scriptures:

"Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

"Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

"Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

"Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

"The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thy hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the

wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me." (Deuteronomy xxviii. 16-20.)

The adjective cursed signifies unhappy. I ask, cries the rich man, to whom do these words apply? to the rich or to the poor? Certainly to the poor laborer, he adds. Do you see now, Bondareff, how many curses God sends upon the poor laborer, upon his goods, and even upon future generations?

On such laws is founded the society of the world.

57. Have I told the truth? he asks, and I have replied, yes.

Can I contradict him? It would be useless. Could my arguments overcome him?

I am content to say to myself, You speak falsely, sir! You have not so much brains as you think, nor am I the fool you imagine me to be. On both points you deceive yourself greatly.

There are many distinguished persons who feel no horror of my poverty; they can judge fairly between us.

58. The rich man says: If a man of your inferior class obtains some education, he will seek an occupation in which he may dispense with manual labor.

Thus if you were all educated, you would labor no more, but would imitate us.

But, I ask, what will we then eat?

We will live as Christ's commandment points out: "Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap; nor gather into

barns; but God feedeth them." So he answers me.

All these arguments are absolutely opposed to the primitive and to the natural law.

I ask of the rich man: Which is the most immutable law? Is it the theological law that man has written upon paper, or the natural law that God has written in our hearts? Truly, neither is to be rejected, but I myself prefer the natural law, and I hope, reader, that you will agree with me.

59. Well, Bondareff, if you will present your propositions to the government, with mine by their side, my arguments will be approved, and recognized as true and praiseworthy, while yours will be rejected.

60. You see now, reader, how far I have carried my loyalty. I might have concealed these objections to my arguments, but I will not palter with the truth, because it is wrong to speak of this great and sacred duty of laboring for bread, and at the same time to disguise the truth under an ignoble flattery.

But if, in my answer, you find a bitterness that seems to you insupportable, clench your teeth and say nothing. I pray you, do not seek a quarrel with me.

You are so accustomed to listen to flatterers, that my frankness will seem to you intolerable.

61. Let us return to our question. How many thousand measures\* of wheat, how many

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\* The measure spoken of contains about 16 kilogrammes.

roubles, are taken from us each year for taxes and other exactions? \*

Besides this revenue, the great lords, the pomestchiks, the merchants, and all the rich possess innumerable millions. But money is not given away. It must be earned by our arms of flesh and blood, according to the commandment I have given, and not by the pen or the tongue.

62. Your manner of living is to us a most cruel offence, and to yourselves a shame. I know you are a hundred times more educated and intelligent than I, and therefore you take my money and my bread. But since you are so intelligent, you should have pity on me who am weak. It is said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," and I am your neighbor, as you are mine.

Why are we poor and clownish? It is because we eat the bread of our own labor. Have we time to study and to be instructed? You have taken both our bread and our intelligence from us by fraud or violence; you have criminally appropriated all.

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\*The taxes are not levied on us, but on the mines and other works. The manufacturers, however, raise the prices of their merchandise, and so make us pay the amount of the taxes. And I ask you, whose hands have labored to earn this money? In truth they are ours. But in whose hands does the money remain?

In your white hands, that you may enjoy your luxury.

In a word, the whole world is in our hands. (*Author's note.*)

It is so, reader, whether you like it or not. It is not my fault that the truth is bitter.

63. The eagerness of your desire makes you ask of God for purity of air and an abundance of the fruits of the earth. It is well. But to whose hands do you owe this abundance? Who ought to cultivate the ground? Is it you, or some other one?

Can it be I, with my white hands? you answer. Truly it is to you, laborers, that this work belongs. I would rather die of hunger than to gather a blade of straw or a grain of wheat.

64. You should ask, before meals, for a blessing upon your food, not from God, but from us, the laborers; and after your repast you should thank us for it, and not God.

If God sent you manna from heaven as he did to the Israelites in the Wilderness, you should thank him; but since it is from our hands that you receive your manna, you should thank us, because we nourish you as though you were infants or invalids.

65. When I had written this much, some laborers said to me: "All this is useless. Do you believe you can make the rich man labor for his bread? If the prophets and the masters of all wisdom came to urge it upon him, he would not listen to them. If God should cry in his ears with the trumpet of doom, 'You are about to die, and to present yourself to me for judgment, and your disobedience to my com-

mand merits eternal punishment,'—even then the rich man will remain unmoved, for he prefers his wealth to all divine benefits. Laboring for bread is to him more horrible than torture. And you, who are but as the dust beneath his feet, would seek, by expressing your own convictions, to induce him to work !”

66. I know, I replied to them, that it is indeed impossible.

But they may approve of my arguments, since they are taken from the chief divine laws ; and perhaps they may make them known to their laborers. For this good action alone God would greatly reward them. Then, like persons suffering from hunger and thirst, men will hasten to accomplish this work. They will not give themselves to other occupations till afterwards, for they all depend on labor for bread. Then the obscure night will be as the brightest day, and all will be easy. For this reason, amid all the cares and labors of my life, I have undertaken this task.

67. And then the superior class will see our merit, which it had never before remarked or heard of. It will feel culpable towards God and man ; it will no longer depend on or oppress us as it does now. We are bought at half price, and sold for double the amount. When a rich man finds himself in a poor country, far from the cities and commercial centres, he meets no one with whom he can buy or sell. At each mouthful of bread men will ask, in spite of

themselves: Whose hands have prepared this food? And as for their conscience! Wealth cannot silence it. It will compel men to be kinder to those who supply them with food. Hoping this, I have undertaken my task.

68. And even if this commandment is graven but superficially in your hearts, O you of the educated class, you will not the less employ all your powers to eat only the bread of your own labor, and you will reason thus: Among the poor and the laborers, not only the strong men are laboring for bread, but also feeble women, who have young children that are thus neglected. The new-born child, in its cradle, suffers from the hot air and the insects that torment it, while its body is scorched by the sun. Children of seven years also labor so far as they have strength for it, and old men of seventy who cannot bend their backs when reaping the harvest, must do it on their knees. These things occur even yet; but formerly, in the days of slavery, it was much worse. All these families live and die on the earth, following the precept, "Dust thou art, and unto dust must thou return." Think a little about this, ye educated men!

69. But among us, you will say, a man of thirty, in good health, continues all his life, even in summer, to whistle, with his hands in his pockets, while waiting for these poor martyrs to put his food between his teeth.

With us, the laborers, on the contrary, not

only in summer, but even in winter, our garments are soaked in the dews of labor.

Among all Christians, the first and most important sacrament is baptism. But I ask you, which washes away the most sin? Is it the water of baptism, or the sweat which streams from our faces, while all our lives are consecrated to laboring for bread? There is a proverb often cited amongst us, "The peasant's frock is gray, but the devil has not devoured his reason." This proverb is not true, for I know certainly that I might ask questions forever without getting an answer. Consequently, *the devil has devoured my reason.\** It is certain that we cannot discover with our narrow minds the secrets of God's ways with the world, but we may believe that while you were washed in the water of baptism at your birth, that never since has any labor bathed your face in sweat.

For me, I have not been washed in the water of baptism; thus must I all my life be bathed in sweat. Nevertheless, which is the cleaner of the two—you who have been baptized, or I who have not?

You see, then, what your falsehood is worth. At each word, at each step, you have been compelled, against your will, to yield to me, who am but a feeble man. Possibly you may yet triumph over me through your power, which I

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\* In other words, they look on me as an imbecile.

cannot resist; but you can never destroy my arguments, or prove them to be false.

During 6884 years\* we have been silent before you. Now we have spoken a word that you have never before heard, even in your dreams. I do not depend on you, but on your conscience. I hope it will come to my aid.

70. There are in the world many inventions that astonish the mind. To produce one object, of however little importance, machines have been invented. A labor that formerly required the efforts of several men, is now done more perfectly by a machine than any hand of man could have accomplished it.

But the labor for bread has been done by peasants from time immemorial.

71. Would it not be easy for an inventor to say these simple words, "Make this or that," that men and beasts should be delivered from a wearisome labor?

No! He would not come near the labor he abhors, or the people who perform it. He would have no pity for the poor martyrs,—I mean the laborers,—nor even for the animals themselves, although he will several times in a day eat this bread—or rather the blood and tears of both beasts and men.

It is thus, O you of the upper class, that you offend us, and at the same time you disobey God's command.

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\* This article was written in 1884.

Does not your conduct clearly show the hatred you feel towards God and your neighbor? Well, what answer have you to make to that? You cannot justify yourself before the peasant nor have you any excuse to offer.

72. Here are further facts to show that you debase and trample everything under your feet. If some one of you makes a discovery, you honor him with a medal bearing this inscription: "Honor to Labor and to Art." Has any one ever been rewarded for labor and art in gaining bread? No. And if one were offered, it would be given to the proprietors who cultivate a thousand acres of ground by the hands of others, but who would not themselves come near this shameful labor nor those who perform it. Behold, then, those who have always received all such recompense, and always will.

73. What occurs in the homes of the poor?

The husband and wife must support not only themselves, but perhaps a dozen children, besides their aged parents. And yet they sell you part of their bread, or rather they give it to you.

But, though they have numbered several millions in each century, has even one of them had any reward whatever? Never! Far from being recompensed, they have instead received the name of "moujiks," which signifies a "beast." \*

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\* According to Fr. Michel, this meaning of the word moujik was given to the French word *mouchique* about 1815, forming a souvenir of the Russian peasants.

Is not this sufficient for you, O peasants?

We see, then, that society regards labor for bread as the hardest work in the world. Am I not right, then, in proclaiming that these men love neither God nor their neighbor, but only themselves?

It is painful to see a millionaire, who has received several medals for pure trifles, marching about with his hands in his pockets, and seeming to say, "Look at me!"

And what is his merit compared to ours? It is but as ashes dispersed by the wind.

What shall we do? "God is in heaven, and the Czar afar off!" If I may, I will write all my griefs in a memorial, and present it myself to the Czar, and having gained or lost everything, it would only remain for us to live or die. I have taken the right path. I will continue to follow it till I die; for I have no interest in deceiving myself. I have one foot on the earth, and the other in the grave, and I am already more than sixty years old.

74. When they read my writings to a laborer who does not know *a* from *b*, he will well understand them. My words will sink deeply into his heart. How he will thank me for discovering the law of salvation! How he will apply himself the more zealously to his work!

But he who would escape labor is like the dog who gnaws the stone that has been cast at him. He will criticise these reflections, and

hate me for having written them ; and he will threaten me with future evil.

Why should there be such a difference between these two men? Because the laborer and his superiors are so far apart that their opinions can never be the same.

But what has God willed to do with me?

He has given us the law of labor for bread. This labor is not difficult, but easy and useful ; it is not long, but short and readily understood.

Then why are we not grateful to him for it?

And what happens in the world? One half of mankind seeks this labor, and the other half avoids it as though it were a mortal poison, while they conceal themselves in retired places that they may not behold it.

But who are these who thus fly and hide themselves? Are they ignorant? No ; they are the most educated and intelligent of men ! Perhaps they do not believe in God? No ; they are true believers.

75. Your principal objection to labor for bread is this: Whatever may be a man's occupation or mode of work, he obeys the commandment, "Thou shalt knead thy bread in the sweat of thy face." This explanation cannot please God nor man.

It has been said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Does this allude to your occupations? No.

And again: "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Here labor for bread is

less precisely designated. And again: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Does this allude to your constant occupations?

And still further: "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field." Is there in this an allusion to your occupations? No.

And, finally: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread: dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Well, the wise men find still a loophole; they say, all this applies to the pen as well as to the plough, and they give solid reasons for saying so.

76. But is it possible that God gave only to us the painful obligation of laboring in the ground, while he permits you to evade it by means of your money?

With me, says the rich man, money labors for bread.

It is false! Money has not sinned against God. Nor was the commandment set forth against money. Besides that, money does not eat bread; it is not, then, obliged to labor for it. How, then, can you say, With me, money labors for bread? Do you find yourself entirely just before God, and needing no commandment? But were you more holy than the Holy of Holies, you do not the less eat bread labored for by another.

In truth, you cannot escape alive out of the hands of an adversary like me.

Here is another excuse that you give. If all

the world were occupied in agriculture, the factories and work-shops must stop, and the universe would perish.—Nothing could be more false. The universe need not perish for that. There are eighty festivals in the year, on which we are free from all labor, and men will spend eighty more in idleness. Do you think because a man and his wife shall labor in a piece of ground during thirty days, at different periods of the year, that the universe will perish?

In all large cities, as in Moscow, where there is a great number of factories and workshops, there are about a million inhabitants. Where would you find land enough if all the world undertook agriculture? This is but another excuse to avoid labor.

I reply to this objection that the manufacturers and work-people came of their own choice to the cities. But might not the factories be built in the midst of the country, so that the workmen could by turns labor for bread and in the factories? That could easily be arranged, if you desire to help the lower classes. But you only care to be concerned for your equals.

Do you refuse to labor for bread because, if all the world should be so occupied, there would not be enough land? With more reasonableness, if you decided to labor, you would cultivate alone the whole earth!

For my part, I now cultivate a bit of ground; but if this revolution takes place, I must divide it with another. You, my friend, may work by

my side, with your white hands, in frost or heat, in storms and snow, when you will tremble as with fever, and your hands will become like spiders' feet.

Is it right that we alone shall endure these evils?

79. If you are so convinced that we eat the bread which you have gained by your labor, why do you sell it to us?—We do not compel you to do so. You beg us to buy it. Is it, then, our fault?

If all laborers understood the primitive law, they would not sell their bread, nor even give it away, except in certain admissible cases.—Where, then, would they get money?—They would know how to find it.

The idle man, like a door on its hinge, passes all his life lying on his bed. He has never seen how labor for bread is done. Thus he will scarcely have read ten articles in my book than he will throw it aside, saying, "*It is vitriol!*" This verdict appears to me profound and well merited.

It is not he who has found this word, but Providence has put it in his mouth, because to him the bread of his own labor would be as vitriol, while that gained by another's labor is sweeter than honey.

Do you see, my readers, how deceit loves itself? And if it did not seem lovely to itself, to whom could it appear agreeable or virtuous?

80. I have asked myself, why do they give deceit the name of deceit?

They might have given it a better name, because it is more veracious than even truth. It exposes and betrays itself.

It has been said: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Thus God spoke to Cain, that is, to the voice of deceit. If it cries to God, why is it silent to all the world? "And God set a mark upon Cain," the token of the evil doer. Does he not to-day mark with this token all wicked ones, and with them the sluggard of whom I have spoken, he to whom I owe an eternal gratitude?

81. You do not answer. Do you, then, approve of what I have said? You might, however, make this answer, which is the objection you offer in reality against labor for bread: "I cannot do several things at once. If I am occupied in agriculture, I should have no time for other things."

But, I reply in turn: "I have, besides laboring for bread, many others things to do. How do I, who am an ignorant peasant, bring them all to completion? If I were as educated and intelligent as you, I would occupy myself with many thousand affairs. Why, then, with your infinite spirit, can you attend to only one?"

82. When you fly from the labor for bread, or from the conscience which torments you, you say: "If we all labor for bread, where will the poor get their money, for they live by their

labor? They supply us with bread, and in return we give them money; and thus the peasants live by us, and we by them; one hand washes the other, and so both are clean."

No, your argument does not disconcert us. We are not as stupid as you believe, and you yourselves are not as intelligent as you think. Do not forget that I who speak am standing at the threshold of your palace (like Lazarus).

Half the people living do not labor for bread; the other half, laboring for and not selling it, can scarce support themselves. But why should these last not know where to find money, if all the world labored for bread?

Far from being useful, the sale of bread is hurtful. This present year the harvest is good, and the laborer sells his wheat to the rich man for thirty kopecks the measure. He thinks what he has left will suffice for his wants. But suppose that, next year, the harvest shall be bad, and we have a famine: the laborer will buy his wheat from the same rich man for a rouble and fifty kopecks the measure; and if he have not enough money to pay for it, he will sell his beasts at half price. And while he has not supplied his wants, he has sold his wheat, is deprived of his cattle, and will become a beggar. Thus many are ruined by selling their wheat. Then how can you say that the peasants cannot live without selling their wheat, when by doing so they die of hunger? The true conclusion is that it is you, not we, who live on others.

Cultivate, then, according to the commandment, a piece of ground, and all will belong to you that you need.

83. Sometimes I have not a single kopeck for one or perhaps two months. However, when I am fatigued with my day's work, I make *tura*.\* I eat well—the *tura* seems to me better than all your dainty dishes are to you; and I return to my work singing.

But you, if you were for two months without my bread, what song would you sing?

Now consider well which of us two lives at the expense of the other. . Is it you or I? It is you.

Then why do you not place yourself among my friends? Which of us should occupy the first place at the table? It is surely I. But why have you taken it? Who has given it to you, or accorded you this honor?

Defend yourself by valid excuses, or else do not eat our bread. Or, if you will, cultivate with your own hands a piece of ground, and then take your place at the table. Otherwise, be off with you!

84. I think your reply would be like this which the rich man made to me: I would labor, but I know not how. Once in my life I took up a scythe; I raised it in the air with all my force, and it but glanced over the grass. Then I used more strength, and half buried it in the ground. Next I took a reaping-hook, and after

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\* Bread crumbled and soaked in kvass.

great efforts I had gathered half a sheaf, when I cut my hand. This is what happened to me one day that I was in the fields. And if I should take seriously to work, all my companions would laugh in beholding such an astonishing spectacle.

But how do you know how to eat? I asked him. When you were only two years old you could eat, but now, though already old, you do not know how to work! Is this for want of strength, or because you do not wish to know?

85. The rich man has also made me the following excuses: 1st. I would labor for bread, according to the commandment, but I am ashamed to do so; people would point their fingers at me. 2d. Is it proper for a rich man like me to labor with the poor? 3d. All intelligent and well-educated men would exclude me from their society. 4th. In laboring for bread, I would earn but 30 kopecks a day, while at home, with my pen, I can earn 10 roubles. Behold the reasoning by which the educated classes reject this labor in which they can see only loss and humiliation!

86. But, they add, are we for that reason culpable in God's eyes? "No; for Jesus Christ, when dying for us, exhorted us not to commit sin, and not to fulfil this commandment, that is, not to labor for bread, in saying: "Behold the fowls of the air," etc. Therefore we do not, and never will, labor for bread.

87. But if you are thus redeemed, I reply,

why, then, do you eat the product of another's labor? Can it be, that he has redeemed you, and not us? If he had thus redeemed the whole human race, he should have arranged that wheat would be produced already kneaded into bread and baked to each one's taste, or he should have sent us manna from heaven, as was done to the Israelites in the Wilderness.

But we see clearly that he did not redeem men either from sin or from labor for bread. Each of us must redeem himself by good works, and not rely only on the merits even of Christ.

88. We sin, we disobey the divine precepts, and we incur all the maledictions pronounced in Deuteronomy. It is not so, according to you. Jesus Christ, you would say, takes on himself our sins, our impieties, and our maledictions. What a fine invention! and how exact your calculation is! No; each one must redeem himself by obeying the primitive command, "Eat the bread of thy labor." There is no greater virtue; and to fail in it is the most dangerous of crimes.

89. If you are rich, live in luxury as much as you can, be as haughty as you will, and augment your dainty dishes, but instead of evading labor for bread, hasten to accomplish it.

90. There is always a great enmity between the rich and the poor. But when they are together, they dissimulate. Who has created this hatred—the rich or the poor? Says Sirach: "What agreement is there between the hyena

and the dog? And what peace between the rich and the poor?

“As the proud hate humility, so doth the rich abhor the poor.” (Ecclesiasticus xiii. 18–20.)

Whose is the fault? It is the rich man's, not the poor laborer's.

I ask you again, and still more loudly, not to forget that I who stand on the threshold of the rich man's palace, like Lazarus, address myself, in the name of all laborers, to the higher classes, and not only to the reader.

91. They say: We accomplish ten times more work than the laborer. Can we, then, be regarded as sluggards?

On festivals the laborer works, while the rich man rests on his couch, serving neither himself, his neighbor, nor God. They say then, the idle man does his duty, while the laborer commits a crime, in breaking the fourth commandment.

Is not that the position we occupy?

During 330 days in the year do what you will; occupy yourself as it shall please you; but during 35 days, at different times in the year, every man should labor for bread.

92. But why do I speak at such length, when a few words ought to suffice? It is because I must oppose a solid barrier to the subterfuges behind which you entrench yourselves; and for that, I must reply fully to your many arguments.

Can it be because there is neither a past nor

a future for God, but all is to him as the present, that he has not comprehended that if man must always eat, he must also always labor? If he inflicted on you a penance for your sins, and said, Take a stone of a hundred pounds weight and carry it, you would reply: I cannot do it, Lord, for you have not given me strength sufficient. Or if he said, Fly in the air like a bird, you would answer: You have not given me wings, and it is impossible to obey your command. Such excuses would be legitimate.

But why can you not labor for bread? In truth, you will reply, it is because of my condition in life. I have white and delicate hands, and the ears of corn will scratch my skin.

94. Again, you will evade labor for bread because you say that in occupying yourself in any work, you obey the commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread."

One will say: "I have written, to-day, nine hundred and ninety-one lines; thus I have eaten my bread in the sweat of my face." Another says: "I have, to-day, given my orders to my people, I have seen that they labored well for me; thus have I eaten my bread in the sweat of my face." A third says: "I have, to-day, been driven about the city in a rich carriage; I have thus eaten my bread in the sweat of my face." A fourth says: "I have, to-day, sold damaged merchandise for good, and I have defrauded

inexperienced men: I eat my bread in the sweat of my face."

And the thief says in his turn:

"I have not slept during the night, I have labored with my hands: I eat my bread, more truly than you, in the sweat of my face."

If it is not by truth, it is by cunning and eloquence that you gain your cause, as Kriloff has said.\* "All the animals who are provided with claws and teeth are innocent, they are al-

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\* Kriloff (Ivan Andreiewitch), the Russian fabulist, was born in a small village of Orenburg in 1768, and died at St. Petersburg in 1864. Attracted by the theatre, he composed in early youth a farce called "The Coffee-pot" (1783), and several comedies and tragedies, of which the principal ones are *Cleopatra* and *Philomela*.

But this was not his real vocation. In 1808, by the advice of one of his friends, who foresaw his true talent, he translated two of La Fontaine's fables, *The Maid* and *The Oak and the Reed*. His translation was striking in its originality and its picturesque character.

Published in the *Spectator of Moscow*, they obtained a great success. Kriloff then devoted himself exclusively to the composition of fables, and became the La Fontaine of Russia.

Nevertheless, the pen of Kriloff gave all subjects a Russian aspect. He distinguished himself from La Fontaine and Lessing by his coarse pleasantry and cynical wit, which are qualities that are popular in Moscow.

His Fables form a considerable collection (St. Petersburg, 1847, 3 vols. in 8vo). Count Orloff published in Paris, in 1825, *Russian Fables taken from M. Kriloff's Collection, and imitated in French and Italian Verse by several Authors* (2 vols. in 8vo). M. A. Baugeault has translated in verse Kriloff's principal fables (Paris, 1852, 8vo). We must also mention the metrical version of Charles Parfait (Plon, 1867.) The fable referred to by Bondareff is an imitation of *The Animals Sick of the Plague*, by La Fontaine.

most holy; but they accuse the timid ox; the tigers and wolves cry out against him; and they at once strangle and devour him."

It seems to me that Kriloff by the animals, meant the laborers, and intended the timid ox to personify the rich man. What do you think about it, reader?

95. You who, here in Russia, eat the bread produced by our labor number about thirty millions, including Jews and Gipsies. How can we support you all, supplying you with fine clothes, good beds, and warm covering?

It is for you that we must labor day and night, without rest, and endure great privations.

Is it not unjust? Is it not criminal on your part?

96. And as though you had not heard what I have been saying, you will ask: Of what injustice are you the victims, and what crime have we committed? We do not take your bread for nothing, but we buy it with the money we have earned by our own work.

And where did you get this money?

It was earned by working according to the commandment.

But with us our money does not accrue from our work. Money is not given for nothing; it must be earned by the body, by flesh and bones. And then, can you atone for sin with money? Can you buy the law of God with money?

Your excuse condemns you still further. You have the right to buy what you please with

money, but bread cannot be bought at any price.

97. Do you think you are saved by the consecrated wafer which you receive in church from the hands of the priest? But, you reply, it is not the wafer that saves me, it is my faith in Christ, whom I receive under the symbol of the wafer. No! faith without works, that is to say, without the commandment, is dead. You go to church, having one sin, and you return with two, because you have eaten the bread of another's labor. And where, do you ask? In church.

98. Not only, O ye rich, do you now live by the labor of others, but you hope in the future life to obtain by the merits of another, who is Christ, eternal happiness. Thus you believe you have no duty to fulfil, and that you may enjoy at ease all the comforts of this world. You walk on a wide and spacious path, but whither will it lead you? You know as well as I.

99. Often among you are found men who, when fortune deserts them and they lose all their wealth, being forced by circumstances to labor for their own bread, fall into despair, and become thieves and drunkards, and undertake all sorts of criminal enterprises. And usually they die a violent death, to escape labor for bread. But revive this commandment, whose life does not appear among you till you die, and the millionaire, finding himself in the same con-

dition with us, will no longer seek to avoid this labor, but will turn to it eagerly.

100. Let us speak now, reader, of these three classes of men: the Jew, the Gipsy, and the educated European, who, like the others, eats the bread of another's labor. Which is most displeasing to God and man?

It is certainly the European, for we cannot consider the Gipsy, who is but a half-savage. As for the Jew, he was once master of the world, and compelled every one to labor for him; but this is no longer so. To-day the Jew has gone from the head to the foot, and the European from the foot to the head, and, like the first mentioned, he also eats the bread of another's labor.

I ask, which of these three is most displeasing to God and man?

101. I know the reader will say: Can I compare myself to a Jew or a Gipsy? I who live by the truth, and they by falsehood and deceit?—Yes, if you have the body of an angel and not that of a man. But when you eat the bread of another's labor, there is not in this food a particle of truth. It is but two hours since you have eaten, and you are thinking of again stretching out your hand towards the tree of life, to take the forbidden bread. How can you, then, boast that you live by the truth?

102. From all the preceding arguments, we may conclude that there is nothing in the world more evil and infamous than to eat the bread of

another's labor. On the other hand, there is nothing more healthful and sacred than to eat the bread of one's own labor. I do not say this as a supposition, but in accord with God's fundamental law, with which our natural law also agrees.

103. I have said that, according to you, an idle and luxurious life is conformable to the laws of salvation. I did not at the moment answer this sufficiently. But I will now do so in a peremptory manner. (I do not speak of those who live from day to day, from hand to mouth.)

To gain eternal happiness, the servants of God retire to monasteries, deserts, mountains, and isles, where they lead a wandering life.

What do these men, who trample under foot God's law by eating the bread of other men's labor, seek in these places?

Can they not be virtuous while accomplishing the labor God has blessed?

104. When the harvest is bad, the poor man is sorrowful; but the rich man is content, because, during a famine, he increases his riches. Thus he will call a famine a good harvest, while it is the chastisement of God. And if he joins in the prayers of the poor, do not believe him, for he is a hypocrite.

105. And you say the two classes are not at enmity with each other! The rich man will at once make this excuse: What is my wealth? There are many who are a hundred times richer

than I; it is to them and not to me that you should attribute the evils of which you speak.

To that I reply: We must not measure wealth by figures, but by the number of peasants who surround the rich man; for, in the country, those who have each five thousand roubles are richer than the millionaire of Moscow.

If you readers of the city could see the miseries that are inflicted on the poor by the rich in the country, you would take my arguments into consideration. Else you could never believe me.

106. The poor man, the laborer, studies day and night, during all his life, for better ways to prepare the earth for wheat, or for duly caring for his implements and his cattle. He brings up his sons from infancy to the same labors. His efforts are crowned with success. And on the other side the rich man ponders day and night how to buy from the poor man at half price and to sell to him again at double rates, and he accustoms his sons from infancy to these speculations.

The first and last of God's laws concern labor, and the principal one is that of labor for bread; but educated and intelligent people evade this labor, and live like pomestchiks, with their hands in their pockets. [They have imposed all labor upon the poor and weak, but these, in retaliation, do not sleep or lose their presence of mind; they steal, kill, burn, and defraud each other.]

It is well. As says the proverb, the master is for his bread (that is, his own interests), and the workman is not less cunning than his master ; for, if intelligent people put the candle under a bushel, there is no reason why we should watch it. Act, then, as you can, O laborer !

107. Nevertheless, the poor man is very humble before thee, O rich man ! And if thou treatest him with hypocrisy, he will fall alive into thy hands.

Thus the poor man goes in his poverty to the rich man's house, and returns half naked. Sirach says with reason : " Hunting lions is like hunting savages in the desert ; so the poor are the prey of the rich." \*

This is what often happens in a poor country where a single rich man is settled. The poor must sell to him, and must also buy of him.

And the rich man still says: I make fair and honest bargains. I buy and sell loyally. Every bargain has an amiable intent. Would you sell to me, or would you buy ? There is no sin in commerce. I do not sell by false weights or measures ; I do not deceive in my accounts. In a word, it is just to say that, according to the commandment, I eat my bread in the sweat of my face.

And now, to discuss this with him !  
All that he has said is injurious to us. He does not understand the meaning of the com-

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\* " As the wild ass is the lion's prey in the wilderness : so the rich eat up the poor." (Ecclesiasticus, xiii. 23.)

mandment, although his conscience is beginning to awaken.

109. The rich also present this excuse : I give men money that they may work for me. It would be to my interest not to give them work, but still I do it. And I hope to be rewarded by God for my good work. And then without me, where would they get money for their necessities?

I reply : You should employ in your good works treasures gained by your own labor, following the commandment which I have given, that is to say, wash you with clean water, and not with that which is impure. But you pretend to help men with the product of *their* labor ! Who, then, has earned the money that you give them ? Is it your money ? No, it belongs to the laborers. Then what reward can you look for ?

110. It is said in the *Law* : " As is the laborer, so is the work ; as is the ground, so are the fruits." In other words, if we are but ignorant peasants and useless portions of society, why do you love our work, that is, our bread ? Believe me, reader, if I were as educated and intelligent as you are, I would never eat bread at all, but only silver or gold.

111. They will tell you : I esteem with my whole heart all laborers, and I also love labor for bread, and I detest and scorn all sluggards. To this I reply, in the words of the proverb : " I hear the voice of Jacob, but it is Esau that draws near to me."

112. We ought not to give away a single ear of wheat.—Why is that? asks the reader. Because one half of the world will not come near to cultivate the earth, and the other half work against their will, because they do not know where to take refuge, since all the corners of the earth are filled with sluggards. Where three or four men would suffice, ten or a dozen arrive; and not having eaten for two or three days, they crowd one upon another. If one were driven away, he would become one of the most terrible and criminal of brigands.

113. I repeat, we should not give away one ear of wheat. We except only women who fulfil exactly the penance God gave to them, and which we have cited; the aged, who labored formerly, but now have lost their strength; the infirm; and the children, whose day of labor is yet to come. O Heaven! hear my prayer! Grant us for them an abundance of the fruits of the earth.

114. "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." This is the law.—Very good; for my part, I do not think there are any other virtues.—But, I ask you, as you would not wish others to eat the bread of your labors, why do you eat the bread of theirs? In other words, why do you do to others what you would not wish they should do to you?

I buy my bread with money.

Well, let us discuss that. You have always

the same song on your lips, and it sets my teeth on edge.

115. Have I not said openly that bread cannot be bought at any price, that it can only be bought with labor, because its value cannot be fixed by human reason? In certain cases it can be given and received gratis. But you have arrived at such a result that in certain cities of Russia a loaf of bread costs no more than a piece of dried muck.

What ignominy! I shudder at the remembrance of this injury that we have received.

But for you, rich men, there is no better bargain than bread. All is for the best. This is what you call law.

116. Ah, have pity on us, O you of the upper classes! Do not destroy my words! If they are illegal, let my body perish, but let my work rest among the archives where you preserve what is most important to the State. Among the future generations one man may be found sufficiently just to publish it. I would perish gladly, if only my work may give to the millions of laborers who will come after me one great joy, and that they may obtain from it some solace in their labors!

117. Notwithstanding your close studying from infancy to extreme old age, consider what is the distance that separates you from the ignorant laborer: it is but one step only! A man of elevated position, a functionary of but one degree inferior to yourself, and a man of our

class, the *starchina* (the magistrate of a canton), will meet to make an inquiry in view of a proposed lawsuit. The canton gives the functionary some cases of wine, and he consents to arrange matters. He changes the statement of facts, and he presents a false report to his chief, who does not observe anything irregular in it, and signs it. Thus the innocent become guilty, and the guilty innocent; and this is through the complicity of the superior with the inferior.

118. But why have they deceived him? Not only because he does not labor himself, but because he knows nothing of how labor for bread is accomplished. If he had joined to his science this labor for bread, his intelligence would be so enlightened that he could not be deceived. See how many faults and errors are engendered by idleness!

119. Behold how the good writers act: if they must criticise a superior, they soften their terms, and soothe him, as in Kriloff's fable of the geese. "It would be easy," he says, "to make this fable still more intelligible; but I am afraid of irritating the Geese."\*

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#### \* THE GEESE.

A long rod in his hand,  
Peter drove on a band  
Of geese to market bound;  
And being pressed for time, he was not overkind,  
But hunted them and hurried them lest he should be behind;  
And would not let them stray, or straggle o'er the ground.  
With rage the birds now gobbled, and in furious manner hissed,

In other words, they do not cast the truth into his face, but approach it by a by-path.

But I, whether from awkwardness or from love for the truth, I do irritate the geese. What do you think of it, reader? Shall they give me blows with their beaks, till death threatens to follow? Never mind; cost what it may, I will not be silent. I will not hypocritically conceal

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Till the lad was fairly puzzled and his way to market missed.  
A man who chanced to pass that way, the gander soon espied,  
And then began his neck to stretch, as wrathfully he cried,  
(In the goose language,) "Look, kind sir, how cruelly we are  
treated

By this audacious peasant, who our tempers thus has heated,  
We're geese of noble lineage; our ancestors were holy,  
And in the Roman capitol were worshipped all and solely.  
Karasmin and d'Hosier agree on this if nothing else."  
Said the stranger, "Worthy creatures, I do not doubt your  
words.

Your manners show me that you are most aristocratic birds."  
"Truly and of our ancestors we share the glorious name,  
And strive to live up to the deeds that won them endless  
fame."

"'Tis well. Of your great deeds recount me some, I pray."  
"Our ancestors—" "I know that yarn for many a weary day.  
They saved great Rome by hissing; but yourselves, what have  
you done?"

"Our ancestors—" "Oh, bother them! what merits have you?"  
"None!"

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Ah, if I chose to listen to the vauntings and the boast  
Of geese who don't wear feathers and who are not good to  
roast,

What sermons I could preach! "Hush, hush! I prithee, not  
a word!"

To-day shines forth the glorious bow of promise from the Lord.

my thoughts. Since I have taken the right path I will follow it while I live, not deviating to the right nor to the left.

There is a book called *The Civil Marriage*. I have never read it; but I know that the pomestchik Novossesslky therein complains to his wife of a peasant: "Would you believe," he says, "that this miserable servant has neglected to air my shirt?" (I can scarcely help laughing in writing this.) "I have scolded him, and he replies: 'I have always given your late father, the general, a damp shirt, and he never complained.'"

This characteristic confounds me! Idleness has so taken possession of a man that he finds it an insupportable task to put on his own shirts. We must conclude that if he was shown the everlasting fire in which he and his descendants must burn eternally, according to the Christian doctrine, he would consent to be thrown into it, rather than gather one blade of straw or one grain of wheat.

Ah, in what a profound abyss are men plunged by idleness and luxury! Talk to the rich of the divine commandment, and he will bring up eloquently a hundred arguments to prove that he eats his bread in the sweat of his face.

121. I would like to ask (if I knew whom to address) whether the pomestchiks do have their shirts put on them by their servants. It is true, comes the answer from all sides; their

clothes are put on them like dead men's shrouds ! Then what do they do with their own hands all the while ?

This is a feature of slothfulness no one could have imagined, if it had not been true.

122. How these peasant-slaves suffer ! The very recollection of their sufferings grieves me. I shudder when I think of them. It would have been better for them never to have been born. Had I a thousand tongues, I could not tell all the fatal calamities which befall them, or the torments these martyrs endure.

Human lips could not express their sufferings. But I will tell you one outrage we undergo. It may be that you who listen are yourselves pomestchiks. I will not the less tell the truth, for I would not be accused of falsehood. And I have myself been a laborer with a pomestchik on the Don.

123. Three days in the week, the peasant labors for himself ; the other three days he and all his family labor for the pomestchik. His wife, his children scarcely twelve years old, and the old men of sixty, work in their turn, and like beasts of burden. The implements of labor, the plough, the cart, the harrows, the scythes, the axes, etc., all must be bought by the peasant.

If he has involuntarily caused some waste in laboring for the pomestchik, he must repair it at his own expense. He must, besides, thrash the corn in a field far from all habitations, and there, notwithstanding the cold, he must work

all day for the pomestchik. Many labor while half naked, and tortured with hunger; but it matters not, they must labor for the pomestchik. Is it not a cruel punishment? And yet these people have neither defender nor protector.

124. Three days for himself and three days for the pomestchik; in a word, one year for himself, and one year for the pomestchik: this is the peasant's life. But from the year in which he works for himself he must first deduct eighty days which are festivals,—for these people are very pious,—then eighty other days of idleness resulting from the accidents of labor. And, finally: the peasant is not a stone, he may fall ill, perhaps for fifty days in two years. There remain, then, only one hundred and fifty-five days in which he can labor for himself.

125. I ask if, in this case, he can, on one hundred and fifty-five days of work, supply all his wants for two years, that is, for this year and for the next (in which he labors for the benefit of the pomestchik). Consider that he must, besides, collect enough money to pay each year the fiscal and personal taxes. If the husband or wife should die, there remain perhaps a dozen children under age: to-day they have the funeral, and to-morrow they must resume work for the pomestchik.

126. Besides that, the pomestchik takes from the peasants divers provisions, as chickens, geese, eggs, butter, etc. He keeps note of what is given, and with those who give nothing he

will deal trickily, and they have no one to whom they can complain. Endeavor to speak to him of the commandment, and he will not let you utter a word. He will overwhelm you with arguments, and will prove to you that he follows the commandment, and that he is himself content to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, and that the peasants on the contrary are sluggards and parasites, etc.

Perhaps there are some good pomestchiks somewhere; but I insist that at least all those on the Don are such as I have described them.

127. Is it right, you ask, to thus insult the benefactors who nourish you, or, in other words, to return evil for good, and hatred for love?

But how can you always thus praise yourselves, and claim that no one is just or compassionate but yourself?

128. They say: A pomestchik may be a virtuous man.

Well, without doubt he might if he labored for his own bread. That never has happened, nor ever will.

In the eyes of the true believer, the principal means of being absolved from sin is in receiving the holy communion. But according to God's first commandment, the absolution gained by laboring for one's own bread is a thousand times more to be esteemed. But the millionaire has paid twenty kopecks the measure for wheat, and so he is free of the commandment!

129. It is claimed that the condition of the pomestchik's peasant-slaves is preferable to that of the peasants employed by the State. They say that, because they do not know us, for there are many thousand of us, and we can prove the contrary a thousands times. But the pomestchik stands by himself, and he has but to say that the peasants under his protection are happier than those employed by the State, and his words will be believed.

130. All that is now over, and slavery is abolished; but the sorrow that the sight of its infamies has caused me has not yet disappeared, and it will for a long time leave its traces on my soul.

Till the age of sixty, the peasant labors for the pomestchik; deducting from this his thirteen years of childhood, there remain forty-seven years, of which twenty-four are spent in laboring for the pomestchik, and the twenty-three which remain in laboring for himself.

Try now to hire a peasant who is employed by the State, and say to him: Labor for me one year with your wife, your children, and your cattle: maintenance, clothing, implements, etc., to be all at your own cost: if you waste anything while laboring for me, put it in the account against yourself. For what price would the peasant consent to labor thus for a year?

He would ask at least 500 roubles, which would amount in twenty-three years to 11,500 roubles.

This is the sum that the pomestchik has stolen, if not in money, at least in labor, from the peasant who has given all his life to his service.

And this money the pomestchik has lost at cards, or has used to satisfy similar caprices.

Why, I ask, has he taken this money? Did the peasant owe it to him? No. Had he any reason for acting thus? Not one. Then why has he taken this large sum? For nothing!

131. From the entire universe complaints are being made against God. If his goodness is infinite, whence comes the misery that overwhelms the poor?

If God governs the world with justice, why is there this inequality among men? Why is vice happy, and virtue miserable?

But is it the fault of the mirror if our face is ugly? In other words, is it God's fault if we reject the law that would establish equality among men?

132. Enforce this law which says that no one shall eat bread that another has labored for, except in legitimate cases, and then, if men are not yet equal, they will nevertheless approach more nearly to one another. Labor will cut the wings of those who would soar too loftily.

We are poor through your riches, but you are rich through our poverty.

133. Our great-grandfathers, say you, our grandfathers, our fathers, our ancestors in a word, have labored, and we also, as you see,

labor till old age. All that they gained by their labor they left to their children, and these have transmitted it to theirs.

Then why am not I rich? why can I not even practice the least economy? I owe no more than my grandfather did, perhaps even less.

134. Is it that there are sluggards and drunkards in our family? No, my grandfather has said, never! Have my goods been destroyed by fire or flood? No, nothing like that has happened.

135. Then what has become of my labor? What brigand has stolen my fortune? Whence come your treasures, O rich man? Answer me faithfully.

136. Oh, if the wrong they do us were only temporary! But it is eternal. As the generations pass, those of to-day must still suffer misery. They will never have defender nor protector. But that is only because you have buried alive our father, that is to say, the commandment.

137. Here is what I have had a glimpse of all my life, and what I see clearly to-day, after having for a long time studied the meaning of this commandment: all the world over the peasants go into the fields and labor for bread, assisted by their little children. The newly born, who have not yet tasted bread, suffer for want of it. To see these people, would they not seem like bees flying over the fields and gathering honey by the way?

And in beholding men of the upper classes, I have compared them to drones, who are content to buzz without working, and to live by the labor of others.

Every day robbers are arrested ; but are they really robbers, or merely rogues ? I have found a robber, a real robber who has stolen from God and the Church ; he has taken away the primitive law which belongs to us laborers. I wish to show you this robber in person. He who does not labor with his own hands for bread, but eats the bread of another's labor, he is that robber ; arrest and sentence him !

He has carefully hidden the commandment of God, and no one for 7390 years has been able to discover it. Furthermore, he has stolen innumerable millions from the poor, and he has left them and their infants, half naked and starving, while he has by this means exalted himself to the clouds.

138. The bees clip the wings of the drones, that they may not eat up the honey they have themselves gathered. Your turn has come, ye parasites, and we have clipped your wings, that you may not eat the bread of our labor. I know that you will not the less continue to eat it ; but when you lift the bread to your mouth, your conscience will take you by the throat, and nothing can deliver you from its grasp. If bread could be acquired by fraud, and if like all other things, it could be hidden in a secret place where it would remain in safety, all would go well. But

we cannot hide bread away ; it must be eaten at once.

That deserves reflection.

139. Now you of the upper classes, who have placed yourselves among the clouds, consider that you have imprisoned yourselves in the bonds of impiety, and that you have not the strength to break your chains.

Behold yourselves plunged in a profound abyss, whence you cannot come forth till God casts out of you the tyrant Idleness and his twin-brother Luxury.

We pray you, then, to surrender to us the treasure that God has created especially for our use, and which is the fundamental law of humanity ; in other words, promulgate it everywhere. Then we will enrich you, and heap up gold for you, because, hoping henceforth for safety, not only labor for bread, but all other kinds of labor, will seem to us easy.

140. The most weak-minded men, and even children, would comprehend, in hearing this law proclaimed, that it is the first that God gave to the first man, and that it is more important than all other virtues or commandments put together. They will at once say to themselves : " I must labor more than ever ; but I will pass my life willingly in the fields, to merit happiness in the next world."

Surrender to us, then, O ye rich, the treasure that you, or rather your ancestors, have stolen and concealed from us ; give up to us the

most sacred of our goods, the gift we hold from God!

Above all authorities, the laws that are transmitted by tradition have seemed to me most important. But now they are insignificant, because this one commandment, "Knead thy bread," etc, has filled my heart and mind.

It will result, if it is promulgated, in depriving the priests of bread; for now they eat it without laboring, and no one dare reproach them with their idleness. But then, every one will cast this truth in their face.

141. When I left my manuscript after having transcribed the preceding article (for I have taken six months to copy my work at odd moments), they came to ask us to lend bread to the city of Krasnoïarsk. The inhabitants of our village—veritable Jews—had by a vote taken in the communal assembly, accorded fifty measures of wheat to the magazine of the *Mir*.\* Why have they given so little? "Because the mare has eaten all the bread."†

Several persons congratulated the man who took the initiative in this proposition; but many were angry. "Fifty measures! fifty measures! But that is only twenty pounds to each house.

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\* Or communal magazine, where each household should contribute, for the use of the indigent, the tenth part of its harvest.

See, on this subject, A. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Religion in Russia*. *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, Sept. 15, 1888. 1° 423.

† Russian proverb. It is a pretext employed to evade giving this alms.

Why do you give only twenty pounds? they say, at the communal assembly. You might as well have given nothing at all. If you undertake to give at all, you should at least contribute two or three measures from each house, or even two sacks."

142. You see what I predicted has happened. Bread must not be sold, but in certain admissible cases it must be given gratis. And they give it, while you conceal the commandment of labor for bread. But if it had been made known to all men, without diminishing its importance, the burned city of Krasmoïarsk would have received from our district of Manoussinsk alone, several thousand measures of wheat, and each commune would cause the necessary succor to be distributed. It would be done in all cases, for no one knows what may happen to himself to-morrow, or even to-day.

143. Ask instead for money. It will not be given: 1st, because the peasant rarely has any; 2d, because the commandment above cited directs the laborer to give bread, rather than anything else. Besides, money is a lifeless thing compared with bread; it is as a mere stone. No one makes gifts in money; the more one has of it, the more the desire increases for it. Give all the money and treasures in the world to one person: will it make him happy? will it satisfy his cupidity? No. But what could he wish for more? why would he be discontented? He will cry, "I would hold the

whole world in my hands, I would control all men, and behold in one glance the whole universe! Whichever way I look, nothing is mine!"

144. But, I will answer him; you must for that live a thousand years, because, whatever may be your powers, you could never, in an ordinary life, absorb everything. You would be suffocated.

But bread is a thing absolutely opposed to money; they are two enemies, even as the laborer is the enemy of the idle man.

145. They say that henceforth taxes will be levied on the land; that is, the amount will be proportioned to the area of the land we possess. Why do you say, on the land? Admit frankly that it is the laborers alone who pay the taxes. Here is some land that is not cultivated; go and take thence the money and bread you need. "According to the decree of Him who created me, it will answer, I await some one's coming to cultivate me; if you come for any other purpose, depart, O parasite."

Permit me to ask why you exact taxes from those who nourish you with their bread, while from those who never labor for bread you do not take a single kopeck. If the land were but free! But the State has taken it to give to the pomestchiks, and they exact from us ten times its value. Whether the wheat ripens or not, give us the money: and where shall we get it?

Although the law says: "Turn thy cheek to him who smites thee," when I consider the crying injustice of which you are guilty towards us, I refuse (and I include all our class of laborers, the young, the old, and infants at their mothers' breasts), I refuse, I say, to grant you the right to wrangle over bread, and over the earth that produces it; be contented to speak of the stones, and the land that only produces bitter wormwood.

If you had an earnest desire to labor, and could not do so for any reason, you would be pardonable; but you evade it from idleness. In this case, what pardon can you hope for? I know you cannot answer these questions.

You will employ, you say, even violence to procure your food. But could you so live, could you swallow one mouthful of the bread that you had gained by violence? No, no! that mouthful would choke you, body and soul, no matter what rank you occupy.

Rich man, have pity on us! For how many thousand years have you, like a wild horse, galloped over our backs! Consider, for how long a time you have torn the flesh from our bones!

The bread you eat is our body, the wine you drink is our blood. ]

146. When I had learned the first commandment, notwithstanding my sixty-five years, my weakness and emaciation, I labored in the ground for a whole year (1881). I harrowed

without any assistance eight acres of fallow ground; I led the first plough-horse; I cultivated the same ground a second time; I labored in the fields by day, and at night I took care of the horses. But, in spite of all that, I felt no fatigue. Then I gathered in the wheat and hay with the help of my son and my son's wife.

147. You see the effect that this commandment can have. Thanks to it, the old man becomes young, the feeble strong, the idle industrious, the imbecile intelligent, the drunkard sober, and the poor rich. Could I have done all that, could I have so labored in the earth, if I did not know I was digging where you had hidden the commandment? If the poor knew their own strength, they would not submit to such outrages. Man would then deliver himself from the indigence and misery which strangle him.

148. If God sends an abundant harvest to the eight acres I have cultivated, I and my family will have more than enough to satisfy us. Know, also, O idle men, that I could support thirty men with the produce of my labor.

149. If you have an earnest desire to labor, and cannot for good reasons do so, you would be pardonable by God and man; but it is from idleness that you do not work; is it then possible to esteem you? Never, in any degree. Hitherto a superior seemed to me a high personage; but now he is in my eyes the lowest of men. I would like to get this notion out of my

head ; but I cannot, it comes back in spite of me. I hear often that it is proposed to unite all men in one religion. Is it true? I know not. But if it is attempted, I declare that, instead of uniting men, they will remain divided in as many sects as ever, and the result will be more hurtful than useful. It was easy to influence men in ancient times, when they were still savage ; they could then be led by a mere thread, without fear of its breaking. But to-day you may bind them with a triple rope, and you will not lead them one step, first because of their own customs, and then because they have a pride which keeps them from submitting one to another.

Found religion, however, on the primitive law, without adding strange rules, and soon all the universe will be united. Otherwise it is impossible to obtain the union you dream of.

150. From poverty to riches is but a step ; inversely the distance is even less. It is the same with the general and the soldier. A man knows not when his chariot may be overturned ; or, in other words, destiny may to-day give him a million, and to-morrow make him as poor as we are ; to-day he may be a general, and to-morrow our equal.

151. Behold, then, the path you should follow.

Hasten to teach the child, however noble may be his family, the first commandment. When he has grown up, show him by example how to labor for bread. Then, should misfortune over-

take him, he will not even sigh, as he hastens with ardor to labor for his own bread.

“For a long time,” he will cry, “I have wished to occupy myself with this labor, but I could not withstand my fortune; to-day I thank God for having delivered me from the burden which made me give way to sin.” Turning back his sleeves and the lappets of his coat, he will take the plough in hand, which he already knows how to use, and will go singing to his work.

152. But what do we now see? When fortune proves false to a man, and he is forced to earn his bread with his hands, he becomes discouraged, and even disgraces himself, bringing misfortune on all his race. And whose is the fault? Yours, because you have hidden, and you still hide from him the divine commandment. It should not be the subjects who are condemned to enforced labor, but our rulers. And why? they ask. Because you should not have concealed the law of God. The responsibility of this crime should rest on the priests and on the Israelitish Rabbi, and not on the civil and military authorities, who are not culpable in this!

153. You see now, readers, that all your books are of no value by the side of mine. Your eloquent subterfuges are empty nonsense compared with our simple language. All your precious labors for which you pay so generously, are as nothing compared to ours. Neither can you compare with us in merit. The treasures which fill your houses have no value compared

to the bread for which we labor. All your great intelligence is weak before our simple faith. Your millions have no more value than our poor possessions.

154. During all ages we have had the rich and the poor, but no one could see why there should be any difference in position between these two classes of men because one had a small capital, another's was twice as great, a third's three times as great, etc.; and each one points with his finger saying: "Is it I that am rich? Such a one, or another, may indeed be called so."

It is these rich men of whom Jesus Christ has said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (St. Mark x. 25.)

But I have seen a distance between the rich and poor like that between heaven and earth, or between the east and west. Between us and you, as has been said, is a great gulf fixed: we cannot come to you, nor you to us.

155. Suppose, for example, I gave a rich or an educated man this counsel: "You see on your side only baseness; come over to ours. Do not labor for bread, since you never have done it, but, by the mere fact of coming to us, you will escape the insupportable reproaches of your conscience." "I cannot do it," he will reply; "I would rather die than join you."

156. Will it not be the same at the last judgment, as says the Holy Scriptures? In his

mercy, God would welcome you, but for very shame you will shrink from him. God, nevertheless, will not withdraw his mercy, though you have scorned the labor for bread that he has prescribed, and trampled under foot those who have cultivated the ground.

157. For 7382 years your festival has lasted, while we have labored. Now, in 1882, commences our festival and your labor, if the commandment is comprehended by every peasant. What joy, what triumph this will be for our inferior class!

158. If you have occasion to remain some time in the country, you must borrow for some days the eyes of an animal, for you could not remain there, having human eyes. As much as we shall be elevated, you will be abased. No one, nevertheless, will reproach you openly; they will give you to eat and to drink, but the reproaches that will follow your steps will be more painful than if they were made to your face.

159. If you earned your bread by laboring with your hands, and not by buying it with money, your feast would be the more complete. We are now your inferiors. We would then be still lower, for we labor under compulsion and pressed by want, while you would be laboring in obedience to the commandment. Your merit would be but the greater and more estimable.

160. You occupy now, in spite of us, our

place at the table; and we remain standing so humbly before you that your conscience permits it. But then true justice will triumph. It may spare you, but it will no longer wrong us. You will not always have the place of honor, and we will not always take the foot of the table.

161. The sluggards say to me: If you had found out how to be rich and happy without labor, all the world would have thanked you for it. But when you invite us to a painful, wearisome, and humiliating task, who will give your words any consideration? You would persuade the government that the primitive law is founded on labor for bread. But many well-educated people see the law only as through an obscure mist. Must we then deceive ourselves for bread? What is the use of writing on a subject that is not worth the trouble? Or of speaking, even, when for fifteen or twenty kopecks one may have a measure of grain?

In fine, if this labor leads to salvation, all educated persons, and above all the priests, should hasten to undertake it. But they disdain it, and like better a life of ease. Then there is nothing in it of value to salvation. The theory you maintain is but as a tale in the *Arabian Nights*.

162. The principal scourge of our class, that which throws us in spite of ourselves into misery, dejection, and all similar unhappiness, is the division of goods among brothers. It is impossible to speak of this evil in few words.

The cause is always the same : they have hidden from the world the law of labor. If this law was made known, a hundred men could live together. He who should command need not be haughty, and he who should obey need not be quick to take offence. If among this group a father or mother should die, the children would rest in this centre of cordial harmony, and the bereaved spouse would feel the blow less keenly. The orphans would find among them fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, in a word, many protectors and defenders.

Women are usually compassionate : they will care for orphans in preference to their own children. Thus this law carries with it all virtues and is opposed to all vices. It was not in vain that God said in creating the world : " Let there be light, for that is good."\* You have taken away this gift of God in the sight of men, and you say softly to each other, " What fools these men are who nourish us and supply us with good clothes for nothing ! We give them orders, and they obey us !"

163. If a man speaks of a crime before a numerous society, he does not designate any one as its author, for he cannot look into the consciences of those present ; he speaks of the crime from a legal point of view, and touches no one's

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\* Alluding to this passage in Genesis : " God made the sun ; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. And God saw that it was good."

sensitiveness. But if he speaks of the primitive law, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread," he cannot conceal the name of the criminal, because he bears the mark of Cain.

To disobey this commandment is the greatest of crimes ; and if it is committed by an inferior man it may not be noticed ; but as it is addressed to those who are elevated among the clouds, all the world sees their infringement of it.

I would rather praise men than criticise them, but here that would be impossible. In the presence of the holiness of labor, would it become me to disguise my thoughts in cowardly adulation?

164. God gave two commandments to our ancestors Adam and Eve. The first is, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth ;" the second, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." Why, I ask you, do you execute the first commandment of God with alacrity, and disdain the second, flying to conceal yourselves in different corners, while you say, I will employ a good workman to make my bread?

You fulfil the first commandment personally ; why not the second?

It is inadmissible to labor for bread by the hand of another, and it can only be done in certain permitted cases. Tell me why you disdain one commandment more than the other. What if your wives should say to you : "We have fulfilled our commandment ; we bring forth chil-

dren in sorrow, and in death : and you, why do you not keep the commandment which concerns you? Give your children bread earned by your own labor."\* In brief, you cannot reply to that, and you are left like a fish gasping on the sand.

165. How blind you are, O wise man! You search the Holy Scriptures with all your eyes, but you cannot see there the way to relieve yourself and the flock that God has confided to your care from the burden of sin. You do not see the path that will conduct you to life eternal. You are like the inhabitants of Sodom who were struck with blindness when they sought for Lot's door.† But these were in-

\* Compare these reflections of Bondareff's with Tolstol's ideas in the admirable chapter "To Women!" which completes the book *What should be done*;

"This woman, who, with all the attraction of her personal charms, still evades her own duties under the law of motherhood, becomes a fit companion for the man who has denied the obligations of his own law of labor; and they thus both lose the true meaning and intention of their existence.

"From this proceeds the astonishing folly called the rights of women. These rights we here formulate.

" 'Ah, you men,' says woman, 'you transgress your own law of labor, but you wish us to fulfil ours. Truly no! As it is with you, it shall be with us. We will share your pretended labors at banks, universities, and academies; and we will, like you, adopt the pretext of division of labor, and will have a hand in all the social and worldly occupations that we please.' " (*What should be done*, page 372.)

† Alluding to Genesis xix. 10, 11: "But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of

deed blinded; while you, though sightless, believe that you see clearly, and that you know everything, and no one has the right to give you counsel. Your blindness is like that of Balaam, who did not see the angel of God that stood armed with a flaming sword in the path before him, while the ass that he was riding perceived it distinctly. I am the ass; and you, who are Balaam, have ridden upon my back since my childhood.

166. From all that has been said, we see, as in a mirror, that man learns to read, not that he may do good, but evil. The proverb is not without reason which says: "If educated people should lose their eyes [and I, Bondareff, as well as they], and their horses should founder, we should then be the better."

I did not formerly believe in proverbs, but now I see that it is as though God himself had given them to us.

167. The world has a thousand religions, while there should be but one faith, even as there is but one God.

The first commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread," would unite all religions. When men shall have comprehended all its import, and shall have it graven upon their hearts, then, in one century, perhaps even in less time, all the world, from east to west, from north to south, will be united in one

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the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door."

faith, one church, and one love. (See article 35.)

168. Many people have asked me: Why do you regard those who avoid labor, not only without good will, but even with hatred? Whatever you feel in your heart, you should at least speak with gentleness and kindness.

This is my answer: Where could I find patience and hypocrisy enough to speak with gentleness and kindness? How many millions of people there are at this moment, how many there have been since the beginning of the world, and will be yet in the future, who have been and will be ignominiously wronged by you who are the masters of the world! In this state of affairs, I do not say a man, but an angel even, could not bear such offences, and the recital alone of our miseries would "set his teeth on edge." \* And I, who am but a man, have endured this wrong for a long time. Many times I would have spoken gently, but the moment I commence to write, I am so inflamed with indignation that I forget all my resolutions. And I have said to myself, I can die but once; I have started upon the right way, and I will go forward.

169. I address myself once more to you, O ye of the upper classes. I do not entreat, I do not ask, but I strongly require of you that you shall give us our due, that you shall teach us the primitive law that God himself gave to us la-

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\* An expression often used in the Bible.

borers when he created the world. You have taken it from us by fraud or by violence, and you have hidden it in the depths of the earth, like the slothful servant in the Gospel who hid his talent in the ground. Give it back to us now, without delay; give it back! We will take no excuse.

Those who preceded you had some reason to keep this law to themselves, because no one asked them for it; the welfare of others matters little to strangers.

But, now, give us this law, or at least explain it to us.

170. You all give us the same excuse. It is not I who am to blame, says one; nor I, says another; nor I, says a third: and the *nor I* will never finish: but who will say, *It is I?* If we address the chief men of the State, they say also, we are not to blame. In a word, the universe has become, as it were, a perfect circle, where no one is on the circumference, and all the world are in the centre. Ask this one or that, and he answers invariably, *It is not I!*

If the question were of boasting, of raising oneself to the clouds, or of riding on the backs of poor people, you will all cry, *It is I! It is I!* But if we speak of holding out the hand to the millions who are perishing in misery, *It is not I.* you say at once. Who among you will say *I! I!* Though our emperor, Alexander Nicolaïewitch, has delivered us from slavery, that has nothing

to do, in my mind, with the question that occupies us; it is quite another affair.

171. We should, without doubt, persuade men by good advice, and by divers warnings, but never by force. Print these counsels in primers and prayer-books, charge the priests of all nations and of all religions, to preach this doctrine unceasingly, by persuasion and not by force, and to recall to their flocks the qualities which distinguish before God and man him who carefully executes the primitive law of God, and, on the contrary, to point out the faults that characterize him who shamefully avoids its execution. These are the means by which, to my mind, we shall force men to labor, without employing violence.

But excepting the government, who would have the power to do what I have said? No one.

172. If all these counsels were inserted in the daily papers, and in other publications, under different forms, we might wait as many thousands of years as there are days in a century, and no profit would result. (See article 36.)

173. Implore, my soul! (and by my soul I mean the souls of all laborers) implore the government as much as you will, shed all your tears, multiply your groanings, bend your knees to whom you will, but no one will be touched by your supplications, or moved by your tears. I know my double demand has been made in vain. If they had but said *yes* or *no*, I would

have been more content; but they have said nothing! nothing!\*

Ah! deign, O Eternal Father, from the height of heaven to cast one look upon the earth!

Behold! there is but one man, who by one single word can oppress millions of men!†

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\* Compare these reflections of Bondareff's with those of the celebrated sectary Soutaïef. "If the Czar knew!" said Soutaïef to a throng of his followers. One day he departed for St. Petersburg; he would *inform the Czar*. Vain task: they would not let him approach him. The unfortunate reformer was obliged to return to his own village, accusing himself of sin for failing in perseverance." (A. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, Sept. 15, 1888, page 426.)

† Probably alluding to the Czar.

## APPENDICES.

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To the Memory of Bondareff.

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### *LABOR AND LOVE.*

BONDAREFF'S WILL.

#### I.

LOVE of our neighbor is the principal commandment. It is the commandment of commandments, the law of laws, the virtue of virtues. There is no other virtue like it, neither in heaven nor on the earth. No other possesses the hundredth part of its perfection; and in saying this, I do not mean to depreciate existing laws and commandments, but only to give love its full value.

#### II.

And now, I ask you, which is the most useful to man and the most agreeable to God, labor or love? Labor beyond a doubt. But there is only one labor that is more useful than love, and that is the labor that is done by virtue of the commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." This is the only labor that is more useful to man and more agreeable to God than love. Without it all others are useless, and even hurtful.

#### III.

But it has never happened that any one has labored by virtue of this commandment, that is,

not to satisfy his desire for food, but to obey the law (for it is thus that I, Bondareff, interpret this expression in Genesis); neither has any one ever known the joy this labor produces, and therefore there can be none among you, O my readers, that can disprove my words, when I claim that labor is more useful than the love of our neighbor.

#### IV.

And here is the proof. I have found at each instant, and in all books, praises in honor of love for others. They laud it, among all people, among savages even, in all languages and dialects. They honor it in proverbs and sayings, they make it the foundation of all civil and religious law. Preachers are wearied in celebrating its praises. But, I ask you, have these praises and sermons in honor of love for others borne any fruit, or resulted in any virtuous actions? Never! It is not only with love that we can feed the hungry, satisfy the thirsty, clothe the poor, give alms to mendicants, help the widow, or do good to the orphan, etc.

#### V.

If men would only help each other, and have compassion for the misfortunes of others; but no, they will steal, kill, burn, pillage, and deceive one another, they will detest and wish each other all manner of evil; they will set traps and snares for each other, they will commit wilful murder; and, to sum up all, if they did not fear the authorities, and if there were no sermons in the world, they would eat each other alive. These are the results which the praises of love for others and the sermons in its honor

produce; and if sometimes one does good to another, he is influenced by the instinct that binds us together and not by love.

## VI.

Why do they not appreciate this love for others? My reply will be brief: Although love is an excellent virtue, it is narrow and secondary; and besides that, labor, properly speaking, includes love, while love does not include labor. We may add that labor was created by God in the terrestrial paradise, while this love came to the world four thousand years afterwards, with Moses. We see now clearly why labor is the first of all virtues, and the base of all laws. Love without labor is like a man without a head, it is dead. Love is therefore a narrow, secondary virtue.

## VII.

To prove still further what I have advanced, I propose to you to make this essay: Suppress and erase all the passages in Holy Scripture which rest on love for our neighbor, and replace them by the explanation of this law, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." Make known these modified passages, and soon, before the close of the day, all men will be led, in spite of themselves, to love their neighbor. It is in bread, in the labor of the fields, that we must seek for the love of others. It is to demonstrate the force of this law that the laborer should direct his endeavors, if he be not also a sluggard. Idleness and luxury are, on the contrary, the principal enemies of social love. But you who have never labored, have never tasted the joys which attend the accom-

plishment of the law and of the labor it requires; thus you cannot believe my words. It is my duty to speak them; with you it rests to believe or to deny them.

### VIII.

Then I pray you, my readers, to preserve these words, and to fix them in your hearts: Labor done according to the primitive law is the condition of love for others. Labor is strong without love; it can, by itself, win for man the highest prize he can attain before God, whilst love without the aid of labor can do nothing, because, as we have already said, true love freed from all hypocrisy, is concealed in labor; but without labor, love is dead. Love your neighbor and esteem him, but above all, O you who preach love, do not eat the bread of his labor. Again, the preachers have exhausted their strength, worn out their throats, and fatigued their tongues in preaching love, and what has been the result? Love does not exist anywhere.

### IX.

If love reigned in the world, would the present state of things exist? In creating heaven and earth, God has given forever, to us laborers, and not to sluggards with white hands, this unchangeable law: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou knead bread." God has based on this law both temporal and eternal happiness.

The supreme lawgivers, from the commencement of the world, have taken from us by fraud or by violence this precious treasure. Having stolen it, they have buried it deep in the earth, like the slothful servant in the Gospel who hid

his talent. During all these past ages, we, the laborers, have not perceived our loss. Amid the innumerable cares of life, we have overlooked it, and it is only to-day that we think of it. The thief is now discovered; we have found the guilty one, and have unveiled his crime before the entire universe. What do you desire? they ask me. Give up the treasure that God has given thee? No, I will guard it well! The prey which the wolf holds in his teeth, says the proverb, was given him by Jégor (Georges). What! you preach in every tone of love for others, and you commit like crimes yourself! And why? My question is worth answering.

## X.

If love reigned in the world, would twenty-four millions of men be placed under the authority of lords, as it is this day among us, and as it has been for a long time? If love reigned in the world, would the fertile earth have been given forever to sluggards, whilst men, and still worse, infants, are each day in danger of dying for want of food? But these lords, these masters of the earth which they have *appropriated* since the creation of the world (thence has come the word "property"), sell it to others at a great price, and then throw away the money at cards, or spend it in unheard-of caprices. Such is the depth of their love for others!

## XI.

The sixth day God said: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." But the greater

part of mankind will not submit to the command that they should till the earth ; they put this painful labor on the defenceless poor man, whilst they walk to and fro whistling and with their arms folded. If, at least, they had only given to the poor the labor for bread, it might be borne ; but they have heaped upon him all sorts of painful labors, and he even pays for the privileges of doing them ! I do not speak of taxes, but of rents, and the services of all sorts with which they overwhelm him. This is done in the name of the law. Not content with making him submit to these wrongs, they take from him the fertile earth. They have given that forever into the hands of those who evade labor, and they call that for which they have never labored, their property.

This is the love for our neighbor which you preach but never practise !

## XII.

Many times I have resolved to speak to you more affectionately ; but when I behold your treachery, I forget all my resolves.

We see clearly that between the primitive law of labor and the civil and religious laws which exist there comes the eternal enmity that separated the serpent and the woman. But between these two classes of men, the laborers on the one side and those who evade labor on the other, there exists an enmity created by God himself and not by man. They say there is this difference between the primitive law and later laws, that the first was given to man by God as a penance for his sins, and we know that God has not ordered us to atone for our crimes by any other virtue or merit. But if

this be so, why is not labor prescribed by law and tradition as indispensable to salvation? Thus we are tempted to think that God's decree is not just; and for this reason I have said that there is enmity between these two sorts of law. Besides that, since the days of Adam, there have been millions of laborers; was there never among them one single man who was good and acceptable to God?

The question is of importance. But instead of solving it, writers who are more competent than I am, speak of the progress of labor and of idleness, without designating any one. Thus have they always neglected, and will do so till the end of the world, the discussion of idleness and labor.

### XIII.

Here is a new argument to prove that labor, accomplished in conformity with the primitive law, is more useful than love for others. If you speak of this love to an ignorant man, or to one but slightly educated, he will not listen to you. You will see that in his eyes and in the expression of his face: he puts on a dejected air, he is drowsy, he yawns, and is weary. He endeavors to lead the conversation to other subjects, or will tell you he is in haste; he prepares to depart, and what you have said he will not, or cannot, understand. It was useless to engage him in such a conversation.

I have witnessed all that myself. I have not invented it.

### XIV.

When, in reading passages of Genesis to a man, you arrive at these words, "In the sweat

of thy face shalt thou knead bread," explain them to him by saying that this penance was decreed by God for original as well as for actual sin. Add that God, when creating heaven and earth, has not given us any other way of atoning for our sins, etc. etc. Soon your interlocutor will look at you in amazement; he will no longer be drowsy, or weary, or dejected, he will even forget that they wait for him at home. Then he will look down, embarrassed by these truths of which he had never dreamed, and by the remembrance of all his actions since his youth, for which he had not thought God reserved for him, such penalties.

I know, reader, that you will not give any faith to my words. But I swear before God that they are true.

## XV.

He will presently raise his eyes, and show that reason has awakened within him. Then he will ask questions, and return each instant to the subject. Afterwards he will repeat to his friends what he has learned, and the story will go from one to another. Why, then, would he not listen when love for others was spoken of? That seems mysterious.

## XVI.

Observe always that only the laborers will approve of your words: As for those who avoid labor,—and they are numerous in the world,—they will dispute your arguments, word for word; and as a crowning refutation of them, under the painful circumstances in which they are placed, they will show you the money they have taken

from the poor laborers; which they pretend they will use in their aid. You know well, readers, that, whatever may be the subject under discussion, the rich always gain their point. It has always been so, and always will be to the end of the world, as says Sirach, the man who was inspired by God: "When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue, and look, what he saith they extol it to the clouds: but if the poor man speak, they say, What fellow is this?"

## XVII.

Have I not proved, beyond dispute, that love without labor is dead, and that labor, accomplished according to the commandment, can live alone without the aid of love? Love is hidden in labor: labor is the home in which love dwells. Love without labor is as the body without soul. The law lives only when its power is used for man's profit; otherwise it is dead. Besides that, the law lives only for those who accomplish it willingly, and not for those who refuse to submit to labor with all their heart. And in fine, the sluggards—who are truly criminal—are dead to the law as it is dead to them.

As for love to others, we will not speak of it here.

It is impossible for me to explain to the world the law of labor, that I have only learned by myself, and that no one has taught me. I have comprehended its truth with my whole soul. You deny, and you will deny forever, that it is gifted with a force that will, one day, unite all men in one faith, one church, and one love, because it is the chief of all virtues. You would

gain, O you of the upper classes, by holding in your hands the head of all virtue, whereas you now hold only its tail—and by tail I mean love. Love itself creates your words, but not your actions. And why? Because your money has so blinded you that you cannot discern the head from the tail.

### XVIII.

Could you believe, readers, that he who shall have welcomed the law of labor with the eagerness that I have described would do to others what he would not have them do to him? Would he take, by any means whatever, the goods of another? Can we suppose that, having resolved to eat the bread for which he has labored with his own hands, and to live an honest life, he will retain whatever he may have acquired dishonestly? No, we cannot imagine such inconsistency.

Could a man, whose conscience is so pure, refrain from holding out a helping hand to his neighbor, or, in other words, could he behold one who is an hungered and not feed him, or one who is dying of thirst and not give him to drink, or a weary traveller and not give him rest in his own house, etc., etc.? A pure conscience has the eyes not of a man, but of an angel. Nothing can escape them.

### XIX.

For him who has not tasted the joy of labor that is accomplished conformably with the primitive law that God himself has given us when creating the heavens and the earth, it is difficult, very difficult in fact, to believe what I have been

saying. But in claiming that labor, blessed by God, is a hundred times more useful than love. I but use a right that belongs to me. You may approve or disapprove of my opinions. But to judge which of us is right or wrong, God and the Czar only have the right.

## XX.

My readers will say, or at least think to themselves, How is that? All the universe and the highest authority are founded on love for others, as a mountain rests upon the rocks, for there is not in the eyes of the world a more elevated virtue than love for our neighbor. But alas! behold how this edifice suddenly falls down, for they have here and there undermined its base; in short, love for others is dead. Love is the least, and not the greatest of these virtues. If we eat without good reason the bread of others, and thus disobey the primitive law, love is then a virtue without any value. But, some readers will say, we have centred our hopes in money, as on God, believing that we will secure both temporal and eternal happiness; now this Bondareff does not esteem money, and he exacts personal labor. Must we tell him he lies? But we cannot base our opinions on legitimate reasons. Man's inconstant fortune rests always on a tottering throne; and he does not know when, or from what side, it will be overthrown. When the moment comes in which their fortune shall perish, my readers will say and think that the proverb is true which says: "The thunder does not always come from the clouds, but often from a heap of dust."

## XXI.

Even as the universe could not live without God, it also cannot live without bread, and therefore not without laborers. It is evident that after God and bread the laborer comes in the third rank, for on this triple foundation rests all the world, as we will show clearly in the following articles.

## XXII.

God is a Spirit who is present everywhere, in heaven, on earth, and beneath the earth. But which is his usual habitation? This is a question not yet resolved at this day. But it is evident to any reasonable man that, without doubt, God's principal habitation is with bread and with the laborer. Suppress one of these three existences, God, or bread, or the laborer, and soon the universe will disappear.

## XXIII.

Can we not now affirm that the second one of this trinity will truly save our souls from death? We would not commit a sin in calling it the first trinity, for that which is formed of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is not universally accepted. One half of the world believes it, and the other half does not, making of God but one person. If all the world recognized the trinity of which I speak, which is composed of God, bread, and the laborer, they would without doubt admit that these three are contained in one God.

## XXIV.

And now what do you think, readers, would happen if all the laborers understood my words?

They would not fly beyond the clouds, nor hasten to seek other labors, or other virtues. By cultivating the earth, they will enrich themselves, and they will heap up gold for you also, O, ye rich ones! You cannot deny that all your joys depend on our labor: without it you could not be happy. But what will you do to restrict all these men to cultivating the earth? It is impossible to do so. Ah! pity and deplore the misfortune of a laborer who sows good seed in a sterile soil, and gathers no harvest! It is I who am this laborer; the good seed is the first commandment of God, with its consequences; the sterile soil, those hearts of yours, that amid all the comforts of the world, turn with disgust from the labor that God has imposed on all.

## XXV.

I return once more to what I said just now. If God is, above all, present with bread and with the laborer, it seems to me reasonable that we should revere bread as we do God himself, and honor the laborer as the most precious of his creatures in heaven or on the earth. (I do not speak of myself, already so old, who could only join in honoring the others.) To-day the price of bread is fixed at one rouble and forty kopecks the measure, while its real value cannot be understood by the human mind. Once more, it must never be sold, and only in extraordinary cases can it be given away. Bread is estimated at one rouble and forty kopecks, and the laborer is quoted at a still lower price. He stands at zero. And yet he is one of the three persons in this one and indivisible trinity which saves us from death.

## XXVI.

God could, I grant, nourish man without having need of bread or of the laborer; but to do that, he would be obliged to change all the plan of the world, and to withdraw the decree he pronounced when creating the heavens and the earth. He must destroy his creation, because its laws would no longer have any value. But for whom should he do this? For the sluggards? No, no! I repeat, God, bread, and the laborer form the true and indivisible trinity which saves us from death.

## XXVII.

It is for me to ask whether or no a thing is useful for the common good; and it is for you to answer me or not, as you will. Why, then, I ask you, do you treat the laborer as an imbecile, an idiot, or a fool, and scorn the greatness of his merits who eats the bread of his own labor, and preserves from famishing other men as well as the animals? We are fools, I admit, fools in all the force of the term. But it is this: the more we are instructed, so much the more we make progress; but we cannot attain the limit of progress which is perfection. During this life man cannot reach the limit of science, but after death he will at once attain perfection.

## XXVIII.

And further, the more a man is educated, the better he perceives his intellectual defects. Since, then, you look down upon the man who nourishes himself by his labor, as well as his fellow-creatures, and also the animals, what, I pray you, will you call him who, far from nourishing

any one else, lives in idleness, on the labor of others, and who, as it were, turns the blood of the poor into money? Will you call him a brigand? No; a brigand falls by the sentence of the law, whilst this man is esteemed and elevated to supreme greatness. You have bestowed on us all humiliating epithets; what have you reserved for the sluggard? But why do I thus interrogate you? A stone might answer me, but you, my readers, will not.

## XXIX.

If a great famine were inflicted upon Russia during one year only, every one would die of hunger. But where is the wheat of which there was an excess in the preceding years, and which they (the imbeciles) have stored up? The intelligent ones have eaten it, is the reply. Can we believe an intelligent man would commit such a crime? To eat the bread of the ignorant, to trample under foot the love of our neighbor, and the primitive law—it is almost incredible!

## XXX.

Desire for food is man's strongest inclination, yet what he most disdains is labor for bread. There are actually in Russia millions of children whom they teach to read, that they may be free from this labor, and that they may eat bread for nothing; that is to say, to ride on the backs of poor laborers. If that were not their intention, they would never consent to be instructed, and their parents would not let them go to school. Not to be willing to live without doing anything would seem to them as a crime, a

suicide! So they do not labor: that condition is too shameful.

Whence comes this state of things? From their not explaining the divine law "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread," to young and intelligent minds, and from its not being placed in books of science. For by this means men would have comprehended from their youth, that they must compel themselves to eat the bread of their own labor, and to live honestly.

### XXXI.

They do not speak of labor, that virtue of virtues, in the primers or in the books of high science. The masters make no allusion to it, because they themselves live in idleness. Thus the child can learn nothing that is good, in the schools. He will be like the earthen vessel, which retains always the odor of the first liquid it has contained. Many examples prove this. Historians relate that the Roman emperor Caligula was so cruel that, not content with taking the life of those who displeased him, he even drank the blood of his victims. The daughter of Darius could find no more exquisite article of food than the serpent. How will you explain these facts? Must it not have been that Caligula was brought up by a cruel woman, and that the daughter of Darius had a nurse to whom the serpent's flesh was the daintiest of food?

### XXXII.

Theologians claim that God offered the milk of wisdom as nourishment for a child, but that the devil offered him the milk of impiety. If, by fault of the parents, the child drank the

devil's milk, no other food could thenceforth please him. Even as Caligula loved to drink blood, and the daughter of Darius preferred the serpent's flesh, so the child would ever like the devil's food only.

Thence, what hope can the laborers have? We still must expect the worst. But if all men learn to read and write, who will nourish them? That is an important problem that no one is willing to solve.

### XXXIII.

I pray you, readers, not to forget that I speak to you humbly,\* standing with bowed head and sad aspect at the threshold of your door. But you are occupying the place of honor at the table where they serve the products of our labor. You will not reply. Is it because you feel that you are in every way culpable in the sight of God and man, and even before your own conscience? If you try to justify yourself, you will fall still more deeply into sin; if you try to contradict me, your infatuation will be an outrage, not against me, but against God, against bread, and against your conscience.

### XXXIV.

You see now, you of the upper classes, that the laborer is your second father; we may even say, without fear of sinning, that he is your first father. Remember that all the dishes of which you eat at your table are the pro-

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\* I mean that I speak in the name of all our class, men, women, children, and old persons. I do not speak personally, but in the name of my companions.

ducts of our labor. In short, we nourish you as a father nourishes his children.

Nothing can be more contrary to the law than the excuse you present in saying, "I pay for my bread." Where did you get your money? Is not this money that you keep at home with you, the fruit of our labor? You cannot obtain our pardon unless you agree with all your heart to eat the bread of your own labor.—Impossible! you reply again; how could all men do the same work?

### XXXV.

The law of labor may be incomprehensible if we compare it to that of love, because this word *love* alone suffices to show all its nature, while we need numerous developments to make clear the meaning of the primitive law. I have written already nearly three hundred articles\* in comment upon it, and I doubt if I have completely persuaded my readers of the necessity of labor. How can I present in few words all the mysterious virtue which belongs to the law which God gave in creating the heavens and the earth? Besides, it encounters the greatest of obstacles in the influence of money which deprives this law of so much of its force. It is money which renders men blind and insensible. Hear them answer simply: "I pay for my bread! I pay for my bread." That is their only reply. How, then, can I dispute with them?

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\* *Labor according to the Bible* contained originally 263 articles or verses. We have modified the numeration, so that the text of Bondareff now contains only 173 paragraphs.

## XXXVI.

It is time to finish my discourse, or rather my sermon.

At the moment in which I write, the government has not yet considered the law of labor. It has not explained its force by any edict: nor has it preached to its subjects the love of labor, notwithstanding the urgent requests that I have addressed to it, and of which it takes no notice. I pity its blindness. God is my witness that I speak only the truth. An individual is pardonable if he is ignorant of some things; but is it admissible that the government should hide from the people's eyes the greatest happiness that can be in heaven or on the earth? I can never believe it.

## XXXVII.

I have just been told that I will not be permitted to publish my sermon. Why? 1st. Because the administrative authority also seeks to escape this horrible labor for bread. 2d. Because they hate us who nourish them. "Let these sixty millions of laborers suffer with hunger and cold, so long as we and ours may be happy!" And if you speak to them of love for our neighbor, they will respond by preaching philanthropy: but always in word, never in deed!

## XXXVIII.

For five years, now, this state of affairs of which I speak has existed. In the presence of

one among you\* we are as so many tomtits before an eagle.

By one word, one stroke of his pen, he can crush us, and he has truly crushed and annihilated us. What millions of men he has oppressed! I said but now, that, thanks to the government, idleness would flourish and increase everywhere: that labor and bread would be scorned and debased. It is done. You see now the truth of my predictions, and the exactness of my words.

### XXXIX.

The blood and the tears of men have attested the truth of all the laws, and all the commandments of the Old and the New Testament. But in favor of the primitive commandment, which is the chief of all the others, and of love to our neighbor, no one has shed one tear or one drop of blood: no one has borne witness to its truth. This is why it has been reputed as false; this is the reason that it has been unknown in the universe, and that it has now been angrily rejected. Did Jesus Christ affirm it by his death? No, he said in the Gospel: "Behold the fowls of the air, etc." We see 'Christ did not give precedence to the law of labor, because from his infancy he saw in it little virtue, and considered it to be a great misfortune.

### XL.

We see from the preceding articles that Heaven has designed that I should bear witness

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\* An evident allusion to the Czar. It is to be noticed that Bondareff often speaks of the Czar without openly naming him.

to this law, and should seal its truth with my blood and my tears. My blood is dried up in my veins at the spectacle of the world's corruption; as to my tears, they do not fall from my eyes (my strong constitution forbids me to weep), but they sink within my heart.

### XLI.

I ask myself why I am so ardently impressed with the meaning of the primitive commandment, amid all the cares and troubles that surround my life. Will the world give me credit for all the griefs that I endure? Will I receive, for this discovery which is of interest to all the world, a reward such as they give to inventors of trifles? It is useless to think of such a thing. My greatest recompense will consist in escaping punishment; for their attacks upon me are vigorous. But against whom are they directed? Reflect on this important question. Why should these menaces disquiet me, when I am guided by an invisible and mysterious hand, which impels me to act as I do, so that it is, as it were, against my will that I labor.

### XLII.

Formerly I hoped to obtain from God in a future life, some reward for this work, although I have not accomplished it perfectly. And now well-educated men, understanding the object I sought, say to me: "You have not labored for love of your neighbor, but for love of yourself. To love your neighbor and at the same time to love yourself is to offend God and to hate your neighbor." Their arguments seem to me pure and simple truth; one would think God had inspired their words.

## XLIII.

I see but one means to avoid these difficulties. If they will divide my work into ten parts, and only hold me accountable for the tenth part of it, I will be satisfied. If they take from me even this benefit, I shall not be wronged, because I am convinced that I need not wait to be judged by God in the life beyond the grave. My conscience will be my judge; and it will not torture me with remorse, for I believe that I have always applied myself to do right. And yet if there is any doubtful case, I will resign myself to the decision of God.

## XLIV.

My readers desire perhaps to know what are the griefs that have *dried up my blood*. They are these :

1st. I have not the habit of writing, as you may see. I have been obliged to re-write the same article several times. You will see from that, the imperative need I have felt of doing my work.

2d. I have composed this work in the midst of painful labors in the field. I go to my labors in the daytime, and at night I write, and with much difficulty, because I do not see well, even with spectacles.

3d. If I had been rich, I would have had teachers, counsellors, and literary aid. But while I am not entirely poor, my possessions are very modest. And I have also not been well received where I have spoken of my project.

4th. Is my family numerous? In other words,

how many are there of us who labor? We are seven: myself, my wife, our oldest son and his wife, and their three young children. We are far from being all of us able to work.

Our fortune does not permit us to employ laborers; and besides that, as I have shown, we must not eat the bread of another's labor.

5th. It is four years (we are now in December 1886) since I addressed the government on this subject that I have at heart. I have asked permission to publish my sermon. What is the result? It is as though I had had to do with the deaf and blind; they do not answer me. At least they might say *yes* or *no*.

6th. But that which most of all *dries up my blood* is that sixty millions of Russians are suffering in ignorance and misery because the law of labor is hidden from them. Why? That some persons may live in comfort and idleness, and enjoy all the earthly pleasures that for very shame's sake I will not enumerate before honest people.

Have I told you all the sorrows, the evils, the weariness, and the pain from which I suffer? No; for it is impossible to express it all.

## XLV.

Nothing is more true. Heaven has designed that I should seal with my blood and bathe with my tears the truth that I have taught. I have sealed it with my blood, and bathed it with my tears. Perhaps after my death the commandment I have proclaimed will flourish. I cannot believe otherwise. What obstacle could stand in the way? I have told but the truth; my prophecy cannot vanish without leaving

some traces. Do I seek to gain glory? No. I am old; of what use would glory be to me? To-day or to-morrow I will descend into the tomb, where the light of the sun will not enter; why, then, should I seek glory?

## XLVI.

My task is now finished. I have withdrawn the primitive law from the hell into which men have cast it since the beginning of the ages. I have bedewed it with my tears, and *sealed* it with my blood, as I have said, and I have resigned it into the hands of the government, or rather into those of the most powerful man in the world; I have given it to the czar of czars, the monarch of monarchs, the king of kings—to the Emperor.

Let what will happen, I have done my duty. It is for you, O Czar, to act according to your power and your will!

## XLVII.

One more word, and I have done. During the last days that are left of my life, I will consign myself to the sepulchre, and I will raise above it a monument in conformity with the primitive law, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou knead bread." I will raise, I say, a monument worthy of this precept, which is more precious than all earthly treasures. I will show you my design in the following articles.

## XLVIII.

I, Bondareff, will make a written rather than a verbal will, in which I will say to my son Daniel: At my death, when you place me in the

coffin, put in my hands the papers that are here. God, who sees everything, the surface as well as the depths of the earth, will know why I shall hold these papers in my hands. He can judge of their contents when he summons to the last judgment all our enemies who, having heard of or read my doctrine, have made no effort to propagate it. He will summon also the defenders of the law of labor, and he will recompense them. I assure you with all my soul that my prophecy will be accomplished. If you offend a man, you will certainly be punished. In denying the law of labor, you offend millions of men, with their children and all their descendants. Do you believe that your sin will be pardoned because of the blind fortune that protects you? None but atheists could have such a delusion.

## XLIX.

We have with us the custom of carrying the dead to the cemetery in our arms. But I will order my son to carry my corpse on a carriage to the tomb.

Man is too much of a hypocrite to be permitted to touch my remains. When one of us seeks in life the esteem of his neighbors, he receives but hatred; they wish him the greatest misfortunes, and they disdain him; but when he is dead and he has no longer need of man's esteem, his enemies carry him to his last resting-place with feigned sorrow. Ah! if a man could see what passes at his obsequies, he would be but little satisfied! Man is a hypocrite. I now hate all men, and that is why I will not have them touch my coffin after my death.

My often too eager critics do not consider private individuals for whom they care not, but they regard only the representatives of the supreme government. These are they who are our most bitter enemies. These are as pastors who nourish themselves, and let the flock that God has confided to their care die of hunger.

## L.

If a man passes from death to life, his neighbor will not even carry him on a cart; but if he passes from life to death, he will carry him in his arms! And if one had occasion to help a man pass from death to life, he would not do it from love for his neighbor, but only in the hope of an actual recompense, consisting of gifts of money or of public praise.

## LI.

I will order my son not to bury me in the cemetery, but in the ground which, cultivated by my arms, has furnished our daily bread.\* I will pray him not to fill my grave with clay or sand, but with fertile earth, and to leave no mound or anything to indicate the place of my burial. I will direct him to continue every year

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\* One of the best known Russian sectaries, the moujik Sou-taïef, who was Tolstoi's inspiration, also undertook to dispense with the priest's office, and to be interred in unconsecrated ground, but for other reasons than Bondareff's. "A child was born," relates M. A. Leroy-Beaulieu, "and he refused to have it baptized; another died, and he wished to bury it in his garden, under the pretext that all the earth was holy; when that was forbidden, he hid the body under his floor."

to sow the place with good wheat. Later, this land may belong to some other cultivator, and in this manner they will gather the bread of life from my grave, to the end of the world. Thus will be accomplished the prophecy of Job (v. 26): "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."\*

This is the monument that I prefer to all others.

Already I have chosen the place of my burial. I consign myself to the grave. I live yet to-day: the future does not belong to us.

I here terminate my book.

And now, readers, we will meet again; if not in this world, at least in the next. We shall find that world different from this. But I hope with your skill and eloquence, you will be able to justify yourselves before God better than I have known how to do it.

TIMOTHY MICHAÏLOVITCH BONDAREFF.

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\* Men will speak of my obsequies from century to century, and many laborers will follow my example. Perhaps some amongst you, O ye nobles and rich men, will also be interred in the earth where men sow their grain!



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